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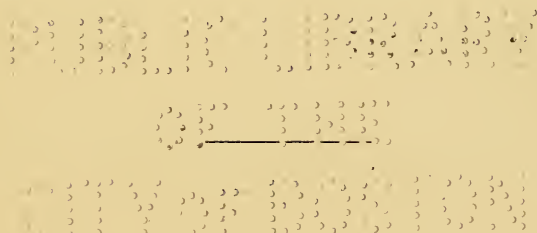
CHARACTER-BUILDING

Sermons and Poems

BY

REV. THEODORE C. WILLIAMS

MINISTER OF ALL SOULS' CHURCH, NEW YORK



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Dedication

TO THE PEOPLE OF ALL SOULS' CHURCH

IN RECORD OF

A TEN YEARS' HAPPY MINISTRY

AMONG THEM

THEODORE C. WILLIAMS

NEW YORK CITY

October 25, 1893

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ALL THINGS ARE YOURS.

“All things are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”
I COR. iii. 22, 23.

IN this wonderful summary of what your life and mine may be, we have the Christian life set forth in its largest, most glorious aspects. These aspects are all different, yet all necessary to the full stature of spiritual manhood.

Let us try to set these great thoughts in relation to our actual lives, and to the language and ideas of our own time. Then we shall see that the thought of the apostle is a reaching out toward the highest and most satisfying truths which we think the special message of this century.

All things are yours. Already, centuries before, the Psalmist, in a sublime flight of faith, declared that God has given to man, being “little lower than the angels,” a “dominion over all the works of his hands.” But many centuries have passed, centuries of art and science and discovery, and still man’s dominion over the earth is not completely realized. It never will be. Wonderful as may be the future achievements of civilization, we may be sure there will always be new inventions, new experiments,

new attack and struggle, in which science will unfold secrets deeper still, and art win some larger mastery for man over the powers and elements of nature. Even to us, on the verge of the twentieth century, as to an apostle in the first, the word "All things are yours" is still a prophetic vision rather than a fact recorded. When we say that nature is at the service of man, we mean that such is her final law and destiny, not that such is our present relation toward her.

In this, as in so many profoundest matters, our best aid to clear thinking comes when we interpret clearly the Christian symbolism of Father and child. We all are children in a Father's house,—a house of many mansions. This glorious world we live in, is to us as a palace of gifts and treasures to the princely heir who is yet a child. The palace is all his. Its gifts are his, its beauty and splendor are to his honor; and all its music and feasting only wait till the heir shall give command. In such a position is the soul of man, when we speak of man's dominion over the earth. The earth is ours; all Nature and every element is ours; but ours as the palace belongs to the child-prince. There are gifts we have not claimed, stately presence-chambers and dazzling corridors we have never entered, or peeped into only to be afraid. Nature is ours, not as the plaything belongs to the heedless child, to do with what he will, but as his father's whole kingdom and treasure belong to the heir of a throne,—his only as he shall grow up to claim, to comprehend, and govern them.

Is it not with some such faith as this, that the modern explorer faces the facts and problems of Nature? He knows — and he constantly acts upon the knowledge — that the strangest facts can be explained, the most resistless forces measured, and employed to some human service. For untold ages men have lived and labored over the coal-beds and under the shadow of mountains of iron. Had any one pointed to the out-cropping veins of dark, barren-looking treasure, saying to the world, "These are wonderful gifts of God: all these things are yours," who could have understood such a message? For ages men have seen steam puffing uselessly away, and electricity has been flashing and snapping, no one knew how. There is not one force, of all which serve or gladden human life, but has been wasted by numberless generations as worthless or as unmanageable. The modern mind has addressed itself to a task never systematically attempted before. It is hopefully searching for the hidden treasures which nature holds. Dark continents are mapped out into provinces. The most remote wildernesses become the Eldorado of the miner, the ranchman, the planter. In common things, such as are found in every land, men are finding new uses, new preciousness. Clay is the ore of a noble metal; coal-tar is a philosopher's stone. Every known substance is enthusiastically studied, in the hope that in some happy combination it may effect services before impossible.

All this means that men now look to Nature, not as an enemy, but as a friend. We know we have a heri-

tage there; and, with her secrets made ours, we shall win her kingdom also. Not a problem in mechanics but somewhere has been solved in the cunning architecture of plant, or vertebrate, or shell; not a task for chemistry which has not been already accomplished in the laboratory of the air, in the alembic of the ocean. How does the bird fly on against the storm? What supports the cedar against the fury of the gale? What dyer can rival the pigments of plume and petal? What chemist can mix the elements which make our bread and wine? What physician's drug or cordial can withstand the ravages of disease as does health-giving Nature every day? Do not all the inventions of human art follow lamely toward what Nature has already accomplished? Her powers, her substances, her processes,—all these things are ours. Nature, in her beauty and her silence, ever invites us to possess her, ever offers us new gifts of God, as we acquire the wisdom to receive and to honor them.

But surely, it will be objected, these enlarging borders of science are not what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he says, "All things are yours." He did not mean that man wins supremacy over Nature by reason and invention, but something deeper, something more personal. He meant that, if you follow the divine life as it is in Christ, you will get a mastery over the external conditions of your life; so that the material necessities which seemed but an unprofitable burden of the flesh will be all helpful and subservient. It is no triumph of mechanics he is rejoicing for, but for the triumph of your higher

spiritual life over all the obstacles the lower life can bring.

Let us put these two conceptions strongly in contrast: our nineteenth-century gospel, of science subduing nature; our first-century gospel, of the soul which lives like Christ getting a victory over the world.

I would not have you set aside either of these great ideas for the sake of the other. Both may help you to say, with a kind of proud joy, "All things are yours."

But see how each of these triumphant conceptions of human life needs the other to interpret it. Christ offers to men a certain mastery over life. He offers freedom and power. That is what his so-called miracles mean. For, when departing, he promises his disciples, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." Never at any time has Christian enthusiasm, though uplifted to transfiguring visions of the love of God, and of the preciousness of each human soul, been indifferent to the outward and material conditions of men. Not only has the kingdom of God been preached as spiritual and eternal, but they who may claim any place whatever in that kingdom must be sincerely concerned with man's lower wants and necessities. The Christian spirit does not stop with the inner man, but feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the sick.

All these things the Christian Church, wherever it is alive, is to-day honestly trying to do,—trying to give men healthier bodies, better homes, stronger,

happier lives, and more cheerful surroundings. It says, as its Master did, to a hungry, needy, suffering world, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."

Out of the large, indefinite commandment, "Love thy neighbor," so spiritual, so simple, come the highly specialized activities of Christian philanthropy, Christian education, Christian politics. Out of what is, at first, a heart-impulse, a profound spiritual faith in the dignity and preciousness of human life on earth, comes a stimulus to man's whole intellectual and practical life. Inspire a man to love God and love his brother, and more and more his whole being will be roused to study all nature's laws and powers, that human life may be healed, enriched, and set free by such reasonable service as he can render. Naturally and inevitably, therefore, in this age we now live in, Christianity becomes practical, scientific. To the aid of the great central purpose, which is love, every instrument may be employed, until every art and every truth is made fruitful in humane results. The clear meaning of what we call practical religion is simply that, while science and civilization are crying that man is king and master of the world, and "All things are yours," the aim of Christian faith and life is to give to the victories of man's force, and cunning, a deeper and holier purpose.

The message is not only "All things are yours," but also "Ye are Christ's." It is not good that you should have mastery over what is below you, unless you recognize some master above you.

St. Paul never loses sight of these two glorious facts in man's spiritual life,—mastery and submission. He conquers the world, he counts all things as God's gifts to him; but always he is the servant of Christ.

I will not inquire here how far our thought of Christ's nature and authority is one with that of Paul. Let the sacred name stand to you now as that of the King of Love and King of Righteousness, as our true and higher humanity made manifest to men.

The truth which is the kernel of St. Paul's thought in this passage is that the more completely you get the mastery over the external and the mechanical conditions of your life, the more you must recognize some master above you.

What message does the world more truly need to-day? Never before was the power of man so great. It is an age of wonder, of hopefulness, with a proud self-consciousness that to the mighty and the wise among the sons of men, hardly anything is impossible.

We must, therefore, keep faithfully and steadily before us the old question, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world?" All power must have a purpose. Riches and opportunities,—all this gorgeous and energetic civilization we are getting the harvests of,—do they make better, purer, gladder lives, happier homes, more peaceful hearts? The negroes of San Domingo, the unconverted natives of Hawaii, in their untutored way, can enjoy life better than we. What can be the only justification of civilized life? Nothing less than a civilization which shall bring forth the "fruits of the spirit."

The early Christians had ever before their minds the terrible prophetic conceptions of Antichrist, of Babylon. Babylon and Antichrist are power without love; a great victory won *by* man, and not used *for* man. Our Antichrist to-day is all force, all splendor, all knowledge and luxury, which, instead of making the world better, corrupts and hardens, separating men from God and from one another. The early Christians looked at the golden Cæsar, and his laurelled, smiling, sensual, pagan world; and they learned in the school of martyrdom the tragic lesson that until human power and pleasure be made subject to Christ and to God, until the crowns be cast with praises before the eternal throne, there is no heavenly life, no fulfilment of the Father's purpose for his children. Shall we not look upon this age of victory and peace in which we live, and ask everywhere whether these gifts which God has given to men, are bringing us nearer to our divine birthright of life given to God? "All things are yours." Yes, but "ye are Christ's": your power has a purpose, your privileges have a purpose; and that purpose is to help you in the Christ-like life.

Does all this seem to you vague and theological? Let us try to apply the truth to ourselves. Do you feel in your own life that all power you get over what is below you, makes you more a faithful servant of what is above you?

I know that when men are in trouble or disappointment there is a turning of the heart to religion. I know that when men look up to God out of a sense

of great weakness and sin, there is a real response, a new life entering the soul. I do not disparage that kind of faith by which a man, out of his very littleness and ill success, takes hold of God's infinity. But is there not a more excellent way?

What are you doing with the *strength* of your life? How is it with your successes, your talents, your victories? Do these things, which give you such a sense of your own power, incline you to bow your head in sincere, thankful reverence, and to know that all these things are nothing until they serve your better life and bring you into freer communion with your Father?

Do you not see that there are two kinds of success? There is success which so blinds a man with self-applause that he looks about him like the king in the Bible story, saying, "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?" Such sense of power as that story describes is always the sign of a little soul. But, also, there is the success, the mastery of power and circumstance, which makes a man more faithful, more modest, more anxious to serve his brother, to see more truth, and to count his success, not as the product of his own petty self-hood, but as the gift and power of God in his life. Such a man knows in his heart that all true success is won by obedience. Such men, and such only, are always growing. They do not rest upon their laurels; they do not imitate their own past; for they feel that far greater than anything they have done, far more important, is the spirit in which the success was won, the fulness of life, the glory of living, out of which the success came.

You see this difference in whatever sphere a man's work may lie. The smaller man — orator, preacher, or pleader — is satisfied when he has made a fine speech; but the larger man is so filled with the truth, and the situation, of which his words were made that he thinks his fine speech a very little thing, — one strain of music humbly according with the full symphony of life about him. The smaller man, an artist, worships and caresses the work of his own hands. The larger man adores his blessed vision, and passes on from truth to truth, knowing that his highest genius is but a servant of the true, the beautiful, the divinely alive. One man, immersed in practical affairs, counts up his own loss and gain, and flatters himself upon his shrewdness and energy. The larger man, the better man, feels most joy that his success has brought him in wide contact with the strong, clear-sighted men, and the great social forces, which are making his city and his country. To him commerce, finance, invention, progress, social development, national prosperity are such large, such profoundly interesting things, that he takes his personal part in the movements that move the world, with a sincere modesty and a desire to know more truth and render wider service every year he lives.

May we not measure a man's success, as we certainly can his spiritual worth, by just this attitude toward the powers and gifts at his command? "All these things are mine," he says. But does he say also, "I, I myself, am Christ's; I belong to what is higher than myself; and I can rule over so many cities only as I prove myself a faithful servant"?

Do you not see, friends, that such is the law of every really strong and effective life?

It was a fine old saying, a noble expression of what was best in chivalry, that the "fountain of honor is the King." A man gets his honor from what lies above him, not from what is beneath. The knightly warrior comes home with signs of victory, with all his spoils of war and scars of valor. He has proved himself a knight without reproach, a soldier whom his enemies fear. Then the great question comes, Has he served his king? Not only, What has he done and dared? but, Was he a loyal and faithful knight? Do all his victories and successes advance the banner of his king? And, if so it be, he is straightway recognized and ennobled.

Our plain, unpoetical society has no longer such fine titles and stars for those who do the king's service; but it is true now, as always, that a man's honor and worth, the gladness of his life and value of his life, are not alone in what he does and dares, but according as all his fighting and his victory are not for himself, but a part of his service to God, to truth, and to mankind. Surely the inspiration of that old knightly nobleness which made men dedicate their swords, their lands, their noble names "to God and the King," is with us yet. It animates our generation in new forms. But the old truth remains, that your powers, your gifts of mastery, your possessions, are never ennobled, until all are dedicated powers. The true aristocracy, in every generation, is made up of the men who, winning life's battles and possessing

the fruits of victory, use all these things in the spirit of service; and at last, out of all their struggle and gain, their own lives are brought closer to God, and show more of the divine life to men.

What is the secret of such dedicated strength? It is in that last and highest aspect of the Christian life as St. Paul sees it, "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." He does not separate these aspects. To him it is all one life: the mastery over circumstance, the service for Christ, the life in God,—all these are one.

The time may never come when all men will think the same thoughts about God, or use the same words and forms in the attempt to utter the divine name; but let us try to see what is the meaning of this ancient word, that "Christ is God's." The name of Christ stands for our humanity made perfect, for human life filled with love and truth; every human excellence we can strive for, every pure joy and uplifted affection,—that is Christ. But this higher life was possible to Jesus, and is possible to us, only as it is life in God and life from God.

I know that some men live long and live usefully without this higher interpretation of life, which only faith and prayer give. A man may go on achieving mastery over circumstances, but never bring that mastery under subjection to the law of Christ. He may

"Live at ease, and full
Of honor, wealth, good fare, aim not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state."

A man may even truly honor and serve his fellow-men, may work for his country, and care only for the better and nobler things in human life; he may even, because he has a high ideal of what a good life is, reverence Jesus most sincerely; yet, with all this he may not rise to the standpoint of religion.

What that standpoint is, we best express by pointing to the life of Jesus. To him all life was from God, and for God. All power and beauty, all human love, the mystery of joy or sorrow, are but the various communication of the Father's life to the child's life.

You and I do not have this knowledge of the Father as immediately, as perfectly, as it was in Christ. Individually our faith is feeble, and our prayers so mixed with self that we need the whole chorus of believing souls to call forth all the consciousness of God of which we are capable. We need not only our own language, our own experience, in which to express our faith in God, we need also St. Paul, à Kempis, Channing, Phillips Brooks, or whatever great, clear soul can bring us God's word most largely. So, if you ask any man his religion, he generally refers you to some authority, some name, saying, "I am of this church or that," "I follow such and such a prophet." But remember that behind all these authorities and teachers of yours, is the ultimate truth, the divine life, which they struggle to utter. You are taught of them, they are taught of the Spirit. "Ye are Christ's," but "Christ is God's." All this mediatorial faith is but for a help, a beginning. Its consummation is reached when, instead of saying,

“Show us the Father,” you find God directly, personally, in the holy place of your own soul.

As the old catechism truly said, the “Chief end of man” is “to know God and enjoy him forever.” To this end all else leads up,—all conquest of self and circumstance, all valiant service for truth and good, all fellowship with saintly souls,—it is that, by these many ways, you may be “filled with all the fulness of God.” To this end is directed all the discipline your souls receive, both now and to all eternity. Gain or loss, power or weakness,—both alike can bring such larger measure of the divine life that, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.”

I know we cannot sufficiently express or realize this supreme and final aim of man’s existence. If we could, we should be mortal men no longer: earth could teach us no more, and heaven itself, to the soul with the perfect vision of God, would have no further revelation to unfold.

But whatever deepens and ennobles your spiritual life is always bringing you into a more living fellowship with the Father. Every conquest for truth and right, every faintest prayer, and every voice within you which yearns for God, is fulfilling the end for which God made you,—that you may belong utterly to him, and “stand before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

GOD IN ALL.

THE flowing Soul, nor low nor high,
Is perfect here, is perfect there.
Each drop in ocean orbs the sky,
And seeing eyes make all things fair.

The evening clouds, the wayside flower,
Surpass the Andes and the rose;
And wrapped in every hasty hour
Is all the lengthened year bestows.

Therefore erase thy false degrees!
From stock and stone strike starry fire!
Lo! even in the "least of these"
Dwells the Lord Christ,—the world's desire.

THE TRUE SELF.

“O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.”—PSALM cxxxix. i.

THE man who said that must have felt, more than some men ever feel, the mysteriousness of his own nature. He felt that God, and God only, had searched and understood him perfectly.

Was he not right? Who but God can understand any one of us? Who can judge his brother? Man judgeth after the outward appearance; and who does not know how full of error his judgments are? The character and actions of men, as they appear in history,—and all the contemporary social reputations concerning which we maintain such a passionate interest,—are but the flashing, surface foam of deep tides of spiritual tendency which never get recorded. Even persons to whom we are nearest, those united by the most intimate ties of blood or lifelong habit, are sometimes prompted by springs of action which it is beyond our power to estimate. All causes are invisible. But no processes in nature are so deeply hidden as those which fashion a human life. We do not even know ourselves. The currents of our conscious mind spring out of hidden sources, which are

perceived by us only in some rare moment of profound self-knowledge, seen as in a flash, and then closed to vision till the next apocalypse is given.

But are there not, perhaps, some clear, transparent souls in whom no doubtful depths exist, natures made like those crystals which show at a glance all the inner lines and structure? I do not believe it. Any wide experience must induce in sympathetic minds a sense of the mystery of human life and character. It is only the superficial observer who boasts such knowledge of the world that he can shelve each offered specimen of humanity in some mental cabinet, according to genus and species. This worldly estimate of character is but the practical cleverness of experts who judge the men they meet by the standard of their own interests. The lawyer's eye detects the tractable juryman. The accomplished hostess measures and adjusts the social talents of her guests, just as the politician can see what men may be made most useful in his campaign. But this expert's knowledge is partial. Human beings cannot be so catalogued, when all the range and complexity of character are taken into account. What most men really are, is beyond any human power to discern.

It is important for us to keep some consciousness of this mystery that is in each human life. If your social position brings you into contact with large numbers of persons, you acquire a useful but fatal facility in passing judgment on others. If you have lived much retired, and have little experience of the world, you come to regard both your own life and

those about you as playing a limited part in some commonplace drama of every-day existence, mere creatures of habit and routine.

The hidden resources which lie in every soul are not commonly made known to you. When great things happen, some call of danger sounds, or a crisis arises which puts personal loyalty to its sharpest test, you see some hitherto simple friend or neighbor rise to the demand, with pathetic and amazing force of faith and courage, hope and patience. You watch with bated breath to see that familiar character, which you thought you had measured, now entering into a height and depth of spiritual life which fills you with humility. How often, indeed, do the larger forces of existence enter narrowed homes, with the dreaded power of change or death, only to bring after them some such ministering angel train!

It is well for us to remember always these hidden forces that are in ordinary men and women, this large responsiveness to high things in the lives which we know only in the common things. Forget the mysteriousness of our nature, and you can neither appreciate the true worth of other men nor meet the issues of your own life.

See how your knowledge of men deepens as more and more you adjust your standard of judgment to these hidden forces of life. Once you were satisfied to judge yourself and others by some simple code of behavior, that went no deeper than seemly actions and kindly manners, which the world expected of you. The man who does not violate the social code of his own

set, who never exhibits gross or violent selfishness, or calls upon himself any rebuke or scandal,—such a life seemed satisfactory.

Now this outward standard falls short. You learn to think less of manners and more of motives. You learn to have less regard for the outward appearances, and to think more of God who looks upon the heart. You learn that it is that which is from within which makes a man clean or unclean, and not to eat with unwashed hands.

But, also, this standard of self-consciousness fails. Below our conscious life there are powers unnamed, which are greater than the ones we use. We are better and stronger than we know: we are also weaker and more evil than we know.

When the word of prophecy came to Isaiah, he cried, “Woe is me, because I am a man of unclean lips!” So, when a prophet foretold his sin to Hazeal, that servant of the Syrian king, he answered, saying, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?” These examples illustrate what is in your life and mine. We are better than we know: we are also worse than we know. How will you meet this mysteriousness of your nature? Will you meet it in the spirit of fear or the spirit of faith?

Some people in our own time, who have apprehended more clearly than ever men used to do that unknown region in every soul, come to us with their fatalism and their pessimism, teaching us in grand, philosophic words that we are both helpless and blind, that human nature is but the battle-ground of awful

non-human forces which spring from some dark underworld, and toss us to and fro. Do you believe that passion is more powerful than thought, and matter more than mind? The half-discerned forces of your nature, your half-developed instincts, your hereditary tendency, your latent appetites,—do you believe that these powers are as a surging up in you of forces forever beyond your control? Are they accidental, purposeless, having no relation to what is highest and best in you to-day?

Or, rather, do you take the unknown in your life not in doubt, but in faith? Do you enter these places of battle and darkness which are round your soul, in conviction that they are your opportunity for getting some great new strength and light?

That is the faith we all need. There will never anything come into your life which is meaningless and vain. No dark, irrevocable fate has shaped your way. Whatever new forces may come into your life, they may all have part in the upbuilding of your highest manhood. If burdens come, they will not be greater than God gives strength to bear. If it should happen, as it probably will not, that temptations should ever come which your besetting sins of to-day give you no reason to expect, you may be sure that any such new danger or tempting passion will never come until your nature needs the very strength and light by which you are to meet it.

Do you accept your life with such a faith as that? Then you can understand, in part, the great thankful cry of the Psalmist: "O God, thou hast searched me,

and known me. Thou understandest my thought afar off." Oh that all our self-examination might lead up to this cry of faith!

Your Greek oracle tells you, "Know thyself." In all your philosophy, you are aiming at self-knowledge. But it is plain that any complete self-knowledge is impossible for you, simply because you are growing, because the work of God is not yet complete in you.

It is true that the conscious part of your life is all-important; for all your unconscious tendencies must come to light in your thought and will before they can reach fulfilment in action. Until a tendency is known, you cannot govern it. Here alone is your control, and your responsibility. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

Yet because self-knowledge carries us such a little way, we need some higher commandment. We need not so much to know ourselves as to know God, and know ourselves through him. In the knowledge of Him standeth our eternal life. What is the use of all your self-questioning and self-examination? Is there eternal life in it? Can you win a race by measuring your muscles and weighing yourself? This poor self-consciousness of yours is only a means to an end, only one stage by which you rise to the larger consciousness of what God is, and what he is to you.

As we look at the world of men about us, we see that there are some mere children of the senses, swept on by chance and passion they know not where, who have not risen to self-knowledge; there are some to whom the burden of self is painfully heavy; and others

who are risen above this fruitless self-consciousness, and are joyful in their vision of God. You have known these spiritual conditions as moods in your own life; you have known much of the carelessness and blindness of unreflecting animalism; you have known the return of your soul upon itself, and all the toiling and striving of your nature with its weaknesses and perils.

You have caught glimpses of a happier condition, it may be, when you knew yourself the instrument of a higher will, and, putting yourself out of sight, were filled with thoughts of God, and the joy of serving in his kingdom.

Try to picture in detail these several stages in the lives of men. First, there is a sadly multiplied throng of those who have never risen as high as the thoughtful, anxious life. They never search and try their hearts, or seek to understand their thoughts. They drift through life, clutching at shadows and building on sand. To be left alone with thought is hateful to them. They have no wish to know, but only to feel, existence. They dare not examine their own hearts. They are selfish; yet they never think of themselves in the spirit of truth, asking the solemn question, "Who and what am I in God's world, and what is my destiny here?" Rather they grasp at anything to make them "forget themselves." Even for a moment they would wrap themselves in waking dreams, against the clear daylight.

This is the hidden spiritual source of the awful whirl of excitement, dissipation, and sin that glares upon the surface of our metropolitan life. One seems

to hear from all the haunts of folly and shame the cry of self-blinded souls, who say, "We will not look upon the truth: take us away from ourselves, intoxicate us, destroy us, but leave us not alone with ourselves; for we cannot bear it." And do not think these drifting souls, who will not look at truth, are to be found only among the baser and coarser offenders. It is possible for us to lose the nobler birthright of our natures through what the world calls folly, and not sin, and to spend our years as a tale that is told. Without seeming to make shipwreck of your life, you may drift, drift away; and the result is the same.

Then there is a second class of men, the truth-seekers and serious ones. They feel the mystery of human life. They question the world, and look deeply into the soul, asking for some ultimate law that they may live by. Who has not seen these anxious souls, so conscientious, so sincere? Who does not know how all their self-culture and self-discipline fail to satisfy themselves or to invigorate others? If religious, they look with the spirit of criticism upon their own prayers, and interpret the great inspirations of Christian faith as new proof of their unworthiness as sinful men. Feeling after faith as a great problem, they are able to think much wisdom about God, but not to forget themselves in the love of God or to give themselves gladly to his service.

And yet these questioning, self-perplexing natures are those to whom Jesus speaks with peculiar tenderness. They are not far from the kingdom of heaven. ("Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?")

What a change is born in such natures as they begin to leave their self-consciousness behind! Is yours such a hesitating life? Then why will you not accept the truth that all your self-disparagement and self-distrust is but a witness of the higher nature that is stirring in you,—that this higher nature is not some goal of achievement quite beyond you, but a power of God now working in you, “almighty to create, almighty to renew”?

You desire to grow spiritually, but God’s part in such growth will be infinitely greater than your own. Why will you not do your own part with joy, and trust Him for the rest? Why will you not give up this paralyzing doubt concerning the capacity of your nature for arriving at its birthright as a child of God?

God has searched you, and known you, dear friend. He knows your sins, and all the evil of them. He views them with an aversion and sorrow, oh, infinitely greater than your own. Yet he holds out to you his promise of restoration and forgiveness. You are to look upon your sins no more, except as you see beside them the higher manhood, the Christ in you, ever encouraging you to leave them. Just as at sunrise time you look back into the darker sky, only that you may see how bright and wonderful the morning is, so you are to remember that darker, sinful self, only that you may see more truly how beautiful is the true life with God to which you are called, as children of the day.

When we search and examine ourselves, we can only discover what is limited and discouraging. And

this is wholesome discovery, if it makes spiritual activities. But, when we realize what it means that God has searched and known us, then it becomes the crown of all self-knowledge to know ourselves as God knows us. How can a child understand himself? The child sees only his troubles, his struggles, his bewilderment. And all these the Father sees also; but with them the Father sees the growing life, the promise, the achievement, that are to come from all the perplexities of an unformed soul. So it is with every man as a child of God. As we know ourselves, how petty and profitless it seems! But to know ourselves as the Father knows us, that is to have the highest faith and courage always.

Often we may see in other lives, more clearly than in our own, this duality, this seeming strife, between the man according to his self-knowledge and the man as his Father knows him. What was Peter's knowledge of himself? It was that which made him, turning away from the face of Christ, go out and weep bitterly. The fickle, passionate, disloyal disciple, that was Peter as he knew himself. But God had searched and understood him wholly. God knew that passionateness of his as a great possibility of faithful love. That fickle, yielding temper, as it appeared in the Father's omniscient eye, was Peter's fitness for yielding himself wholly to the Master's service, and having no longer any will of his own. And so Peter, as God knew him, was not the passionate, yielding man whose life seemed to tend nowhere, but the loving-hearted, teachable, self-

renouncing apostle, who all his life long was to feed the little ones of Christ, live for others' good, not his own, and finally die rather than be again untrue. So it has been in every sainted and triumphant life. What was Paul as he knew himself? Ah! he has told us. He was in a body of death. Perpetual warfare in that many-sided, strong, turbulent nature. There was a thorn in the flesh. He had his bitterness of heart. He saw the men whom he had yearned and wept over for Christ's sake, men for whom he toiled and struggled by sea and land, still bound fast in superstition, quarrelling with each other, and perverting the truth as an excuse for sin. His subtle, restless intelligence swept from earth to heaven, propounded all the problems of faith, and worked them through by stress and storm. In his very eloquence, the rush and fervor of it, he found his thought obscured. How could such a toil-worn, hard-battling saint have seen the glorious unity of his life as God saw it? For Paul, as he was known to God, was a peace-maker in the churches, and breaker of bonds, and guide of many nations to the faith of Christ. Paul's life to his own eyes seemed but a half-wasted service. But Paul's life, in very truth, even as we see it now, was one great anthem of praise. His stormy mind, with all its castings to and fro, was to guide the future of all true thought. So has it been with countless others, whose lives in their completeness, though never known to men nor to themselves, were known to God at last, and all the time, as moving along one line of growth and power. And, in the same way for

every man in his degree, this truth that God knows, has searched him, and understands him all in all,—what an inspiration it is!

Let us try to see in detail just what this truth means. Each of us can apply it to his life in all its largeness and fulness. On the one side is your life, with all its peculiar trials, temptations, and circumstances of war; and all around and in this life of yours are God's thought and knowledge of your nature as made in his image, and filled with heavenly powers,—that is, all around your life as it is, is God's vision, God's ideal, of your life as he will have it. You may say this is "fanciful," "mere idealism." Yes, it is idealism; but what other thought can explain the world? Here is a bud just starting from the bough: what is the sober truth concerning this familiar thing? The truth is that you may cut it with your knife, you may analyze it with your test-tubes, and weigh it in scales that bound at a hair, but not one whit will you comprehend what that bud truly is till you know of what flower and fruitage it is the beginning. What is the truth? Is it that round nub of bark, as your senses see it, or is the truth rather the divine idea, the unseen law of the tree's life,—the invisible plan of blossom and seed, which hides, we know not how, in the potency of this almost formless thing? So it is with your nature and mine. There is a divine law of growth, a divine type and pattern working through us. That divine purpose for our nature is revealed to us more and more as we follow all that is good, all that is growthful, and as we shun

the many ways that lead down to death. All your self-analysis is about as valueless as your opening the bud with your knife to see if there are flowers within. We must yield ourselves to the law of growth. Yet here the comparison fails. For human beings grow not like plants, all unconscious of their end, but always with some vision of what the next fulfilment shall be. So let it be the first duty always to have some vision ahead of the type of manhood or womanhood to which you are to grow. To this inward pattern in your heart you are certain to be fashioned, as certain as it is that men grow like the things they love.

Now, the inspiration of the truth that God knows us, is that we can always be answered when we pray that he will show us what we ought to be. God has never concealed from any man the vision of his higher self. He shows to every one just as much of the divine purpose as his conscience needs. Not that the fulfilment is shown. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. It is given us only to see that next degree of perfection which it is in our present power to attain. As surely as God knoweth our frames, so surely will he show us to what image we must strive. If God should show us all that we shall be, crowding eternity into the glimpses of an hour, it would be more than heart could bear, and we should stop discouraged by the way.

So it is that, looking to Jesus, we see not his fulness of life all at once. The vision of the divine man is not permitted to blind us with excess of light. Our eyes are holden, that we

cannot see. Rather each man sees in Christ that perfection of his own nature which is already near to him to achieve. One loving soul sees love alone, and sits at the feet of Christ in penitent tears. Another of heroic blood sees nothing but the cross, with its victory over the flesh and contempt of the world. Yet another, some gentle John, finds in his Master a light enlightening the world; a sweet reasonableness, such as shall make evil seem to hide itself in shame. So each man loves and sees the Christ he can touch. Each receives the living word to the nourishment of his peculiar strength. The Oriental sees the Oriental Christ, all poetry, sublimity, and abounding prayer. The European sees Christ the breaker of bread, who heals the sick and helps the weak, whose kingdom is a more fruitful order in this world, and whose disciples are known by their power to dispel the miseries of their fellow-creatures. Thus does each man, and each type of man, find in Christ the vision most attainable. The God who reveals himself in conscience and spiritual desire would lay upon our shoulders an easy yoke. He shows us not all his perfect will, but that part of his ways which are now within our understanding, that commandment which it is now given us to obey.

Since God has searched and known you there are no mistakes in any of his dealings. The Father knows his child. And therefore, in all the strange qualities of your nature, in all the vicissitudes of your career, there is some loving adaptation to the need of your true and deepest life, which God knows as you do not.

With your present knowledge of your own soul, would you dare to plan and arrange your life unaided, unchecked by God's providential hand? If the Father should confer upon you a monarchy over worlds, if he gave you the transfiguring rod of Moses, or let you erect, not in cloudland, but of solid earth, the paradise of your dreams,—if God should give you omnipotence, without omniscience too, would you be willing to employ your miracle? Ah! rather you would say, in proportion to the very greatness of your power: "My God, thou knowest what is best. Give me, Father, give me out of thy endless love—not my will, but thine! He has searched and known me. He knows me as I am now, and what I shall be forever." It is out of this perfect vision, this infinity of light, that all his care of us proceeds.

A NEW CREATURE.

MY heart of dust was made,
But made for love and prayer,—
O Love of God! my heart pervade,
And form thine image there.

And form thine image there,
My heart is dark with sin,
But many a precious gift doth bear,
If Love shall enter in.

If Love shall enter in
At my poor house of clay,
A heavenly dawn will there begin
And grow to perfect day,—

And grow to perfect day,
In heaven's full light arrayed,
Till endless songs forget to say
My heart of dust was made.

THE HIDDEN LIFE.

“These things spake Jesus, and departed, and hid himself from them.”—JOHN xii. 36.

How MUCH of the Master's life was hidden! The gospel story gives us, after all, but glimpses and echoes. How many of his words have passed into silence! What impenetrable shadows rest upon the larger part of his earthly history! And as he has so much hidden himself from us, so he was hidden from the men of his own time. He had meat to eat which they knew not of. Read between the lines of your New Testament, and you find, again and again, allusions to the loneliness of Christ.

His disciples with reverent eye follow his retreating figure, as he departs from them to the hill-top, the wilderness, the garden at night; but they cannot go with him.

He leaves the multitude on the shore, and the little ship carries him away. Yet even on the tranquil depths of Galilee we find him sleeping apart from the others, in the hinder part of the ship.

How often, alas! even when the throng is near, or some beloved disciple leans upon his breast, we are made aware of his spiritual solitude!—that his

thoughts are not theirs, nor his hopes theirs, that he does not share their illusions, that they know not what spirit he is of, that he feels their little faith and wavering allegiance, that he has more to tell them than they can bear, that whither he goes they cannot come, and, even while they press round him with professions of undying devotion, the Master would be alone, were it not that the Father is with him.

But do we not know, also, that this hidden life of Jesus was as fruitful as the life which was manifested to the world? Neither the revealed nor the unrevealed life could have been spared. His perfect sympathy with men, his wide knowledge of human nature, had behind them, as a source of power, the authority, the dignity, the mystery, of that part of his life which separated him from other human beings, because it was hidden in God.

Let us never forget that in this respect the life of Jesus is not exceptional. There is in the life of every man something greater than we see. It is but rarely that what is best and noblest in the soul comes to the surface. Self-expression, whether in words or deeds, is a high privilege, which is fully granted to but few, and to these but with difficulty and rarely.

We commonly think, indeed, that it is the evil part of their lives which men hide. But between the hidden evil and the hidden good there is a remarkable difference. Wickedness or weakness cannot be long concealed with any success; and the more evil grows, the more certain its exposure, until, in the worst of men,

even the desire to conceal is gone, and the sinner who at first wore a mask, or shrank timidly into darkness, becomes brazen-faced and defiant. Goodness, on the contrary, has always some background of an unseen purity and love, a hidden heroism of which the world imagines little, and which is known, like our truest prayers, only by the Father who seeth in secret. There is a modesty in a truly good and holy life, without which its charm and its sanctity would be gone. Moreover, this modesty of holiness is one of the most impressive characteristics of Christian morals.

The virtues of the world have their chief motive in a desire for human applause or for a glorious and lasting name among men. This virtue which exists, "to be seen of men," is probably more common in the world than any other. You check the angry speech that rises to your lips not from any sentiment of forgiveness or love of your enemies, but in order to preserve your dignity. How many a man who keeps his life honorably free from all entanglements of vice or fraud, does so, not from an inner consciousness of right and wrong, but from a prudent regard for his reputation or fortune!

If the truth be told, most men are too unstable in devotion to what is good to dispense safely with the powerful restraints and motives which come to us from the coveted good opinions of our fellow-men. Hence the danger to all when lowered standards of judgment prevail concerning matters of moral conduct. Hence the common lawlessness of those classes of

society who are removed, whether by power or by obscurity, from the pressure of social opinion. Hence, in great measure, the wickedness of all great cities, because it is easier here for crime to elude observation and comment, and because evil-doers flocking together create an artificial social opinion of their own.

This force of social opinion, acting upon our desire for the approval of men, must, within due limits, be acknowledged as legitimate. But certainly no Christian would ever admit that such motives are sufficient, or that they are the highest. We instinctively feel that the good action which is done "for effect" is already marred and deteriorated. A theatrical quality in virtue is a defect. A good man who poses for admiration, we feel to be half false.

How often to a Christian boy those excellent pagans in his Latin and Greek books seem to moralize in an absurd, pretentious way! It is because, as Christians, we recognize that the highest spiritual qualities, our largest love and truest courage, are such as no fine words can fully utter, but come forth from deep places in the soul,—not that they may be seen of men, but because already, before the noble purpose took shape in action, it had been lifted by prayer, aspiration, and faith into the light of Divine Perfection. The Christian, to whom the sum of all right action is to do the will of our Father in heaven, has therefore an invisible standard of judgment far more severe than that of men, before which his best deeds leave him humbled: the heavenly vision, while it inspires, at the same time leaves him conscious how imperfectly he has obeyed.

This preponderance of the hidden good over that which is seen, so striking in all good lives, so characteristic of Christian holiness, is a fact which we should remember not only in our estimate of individuals, but in judging human society as a whole. Because evil is so flauntingly conspicuous and goodness so modest, we easily exaggerate one and overlook the other.

This is true both of our reading of history and of our judgment of our own time. History is a record, for the most part, of scandals and horrors. In the history of Rome, *e.g.*, most people are more familiar with the story of its vices, corruptions, and cruelty than with the Roman justice and the Roman peace. We see Nero, the gladiators, and the vile mob of the Imperial City, but not the quiet homes where virtue still lived, nor the great mass of humble, honest, kind people out of whom the Church was to rise. The virtues of that age were hidden deeper than men of letters like Tacitus and Juvenal could see. But the background of goodness was there, nevertheless. You may read also the history of the Christian Church itself, so that it shall seem but one long chapter of crime, corruption, heresy, persecution, bigotry, and hypocrisy. The record is true, and yet, as a whole, it distorts the truth. The true history of Christianity was never written, nor ever can be, except as it is recorded in the "Book of Life." For the true chronicle would be nothing less than all the hidden lives of all Christian men and women, prayers of faith, victories of the spirit, and deeds of love and mercy, which even those, from whom they came, at first concealed and then forgot.

The world's deepest life lies unwritten. The Church can read and discuss the mighty doctrines of St. Augustine and wrangle over them for centuries; but who has read the sighs and prayers of Monica, his mother, whose undaunted faith and faithful patience won at last the heart of the passionate, erring son? How truly do the old painters of heaven put behind the triumphant rows of apostles and seraphim a great cloudy mass of undistinguished blessed ones, the democracy of heaven, by whom the place is really peopled, and on whom that light from the throne of God falls with undiminished glory. Let us apply the allegory to every large view we take of human affairs. It is only at a few radiant points that the power and beauty of holiness are visible. Only by the eye of faith and love can we perceive the full assemblage of honest, worthy lives which make the solid background of human society.

Especially we should let this conviction of the unseen goodness, of which human life is so full, increase our sympathy with, and our reverence for, our common human nature which wears so many varying disguises.

Let us think of some of these hidden heroisms, which, if some angel should look down on this great world of ours, would shine out in his vision from the surrounding darkness of selfishness and sin, as to us the stars do in the sky above.

Think of the heroism of poverty,—how brave it is, and how silent! How many men and women all about us to whom life seems but one stern struggle for existence! When the writer of poetry and romance turns

the light of his fancy upon the noble homes of those whom we may truly call "God's poor," how the world claps its gloved hands and applauds! But who applauds the people themselves?

The ordinary life of the poor — I mean of the hard-working, self-respecting poor — is full of sacrifices, of acts of generosity, of a lofty rejection of temptations, of innocence in the midst of impurity, which in the life of any conspicuous person would be immortalized. I heard lately of a tenement in my own neighborhood where, half the women being attacked by an epidemic, those who could stand on their feet did the washing for the others, that the sick ones might not lose their scanty earnings toward the month's rent. And there is this sort of helpfulness all over the world, wherever there is toil and suffering among human beings. The simplest needs of the home can sometimes be met only by heroic fortitude. How many a dutiful son has sacrificed his career, and the education for which his talents fitted him, and has spent his early manhood in some distasteful calling to help on the struggling family of which he is a member! How many an impecunious scholar has abandoned the high hopes of his youth, and, leaving the wider ranges of the intellectual life to become a "bread-winner," lays this sacrifice upon the altar of duty without one sigh or tear that the world ever sees!

What heroism there is in the charities of the poor! From the day of the widow who cast her two mites into the treasury, and who, because the eye of Jesus watched her, is known to all the world, there has been

a vast, unceasing stream of gifts and benevolences from the poor to each other, from the poor to all public objects. Remember, these charities do not mean the pleasing abstinence from some selfish luxury in order to do good; but often they mean hunger, cold, or the prolonging of already excessive toil. Yet all this spiritual force, as far as individuals go, is but little known. It does not get into the newspapers. It is only its vast aggregate that attracts the notice of the historian and philosopher. For the most part, these good deeds are seen by few. These furtive gifts of man to man are borne by givers who come like the ravens that fed Elijah in his mountain cave, leaving behind them the bread of God, but stealing quickly away, not to be distinguished from the rest of the flock.

Also, there is the heroism of sickness. Disease and suffering have been the training-field of legions innumerable of brave and patient souls. The virtues of the sick-room are perhaps more remarkable than any I have mentioned for their secret and unobtrusive character. From the nature of the case, they are necessarily removed from observation. A few friends come in: the physician and the minister are permitted, in compensation for many painful scenes, sometimes to see the most shining triumphs of the spirit over the flesh of which our nature is capable. They hear from feeble voices words of prayer, faith, and unselfish love, which make life richer and purer forever after. They see upon the pale face the gentleness of Christ, and that peace which the world cannot give,

till the wasted flesh seems only the transparent veil of the victorious spirit within. But into those holy places the thoughtless and unfeeling do not, cannot enter. Like holiday-makers who pass the cathedral door with some slight gesture of piety, the world hurries by, caring little that there are true worshippers within. Yet these hidden souls who stay behind a screen of bodily weakness, and live what seems a lonely life, are among the real, upbuilding forces of our higher humanity.

How coarse, how shallow, how unfeeling, the world would be, were there nothing in it but abounding health and strength; if birth and death could come to pass without claiming any human tears, any loving devotion, any vigil of patience and compassion! Did flesh never fail, how it would relax every sacred affection of our natures, till we should hardly know how to distinguish flesh from soul! We should be strong children of earth, with little sense of any heavenly life enfolding ours, or of any higher destiny than the absorbing enjoyments and ambitions of the passing year. We cannot but remember it was among scenes of disease and infirmity that our Lord himself found in others the most remarkable evidences of faith, and manifested his own power at its fullest.

This discipline of sickness both to the sufferers themselves and to those who love them is a perpetual call to unworldliness of temper and of aim. It checks ambition just in mid-career. It lays its hand upon the votary of pleasure, and draws him aside, as nothing

else could do, to meditate awhile upon eternal things.

It brings home to us all the affecting and impressive lesson that nothing in our life is really precious, really sustaining and essential, but to have the love of faithful hearts about us, and the inward witness of that divine love of which they are the channels and instruments.

How silent and how deeply hidden these formative processes in the spiritual life, which, like the sufferings of Christ in the wilderness, are seen only by ministering angels and the eye of God! Yet who can doubt that in experiences such as I have described, we learn wisdom from on high, and "deep calleth unto deep"?

There is yet another of these places in human life where the cross of Christ remains a hidden but none the less a real power. It is a heroism of honor, a brave, forgiving silence, which I am at loss how to characterize except by illustration. I see an example of it in the strange persistency with which Jesus refrains, to the very last, from naming Judas to the other disciples. I believe it was because the Master loved him, and still hoped to touch his heart, and win him back. It is but a tragical instance of what is going on all over the world. This charity which covers another's fault is not confined to those whose lives are actually brought into contact with villany and crime. Something of this diplomacy of the affections is needed wherever there are strong bonds of love or friendship between imperfect human beings.

The quality may appear in trivial and superficial relationships. The experienced hostess, who covers the embarrassment of one guest or the rudeness of another, who puts the domestic accident out of sight and keeps a cheerful front, is doing in a small way what generous souls attain in ways that become heroic.

We say carelessly that love idealizes its object, as if it were some trick of the imagination. But this means that those who truly love us persist in seeing what is best in our natures. Such fidelity to another's best may, in ordinary cases, be an easy and amiable virtue; but it sometimes requires great force of faith and courage. Where noble qualities are mixed with grievous faults, who does not know what a brave heart it takes to love without blindness, to be charitable without weakness, and to be hopeful? There may be indeed a point where forbearance ceases to be a virtue, and only increases the faults which it would forgive. But this is a point which the pitiless judgments of the world never reach. And it still remains true that the love "which suffereth long, and is kind" is the only redeeming power upon erring men, except the grace of God. It is the mystery of sin that no man can do wrong without making others suffer, and especially those who love him most. Therefore, the man of honor who shields a friend, the patient mother who still believes in her weak, unstable son when all others are ruthlessly ready to finish his ruin, and all those to whom God has given grace to do such things, are sharing something of that divine work of Christ in which he suffers for a whole

people's sin, and by that suffering holiness touches all our hearts and leads us back to the Father.

But all this heroism that suffers for another's fault, which cannot be lost out of human hearts till we shall all cease to love or cease to sin, is inevitably (need I say it?) of a most hidden and secret character. There is ever great darkness and shadow around the true cross, however its symbol may glitter in the sunshine of public places; for this kind of vicarious and atoning goodness, more than any other, wholly loses its power when there enters into it any element of display. Such things belong to the unspeakable realities, which must act of their own immediate, spontaneous force, and not be admired or talked about.

The cross of Christ itself has lost much of its power over our feeling by having been for so long the centre of a sacred drama and part of a "scheme." Only when we can come freshly and with unprejudiced imaginations to the last scenes of Jesus' life, do we feel how natural and how genuinely affecting is the great fact that he, who was perfect man, could only manifest himself the Son of God through the baptism of suffering and death. But, oh, how mistaken we were, if we thought the hidden life of Jesus, or the life hid with Christ, was all gloom and agony! It is only selfish solitude that is miserable, only in the struggles God has not required that any one is unblest and forlorn.

So wonderful is this hidden life of the best and strongest souls that, as we know it better, we reverse our judgment of what true happiness is, and what the true

success of life consists in. Of the sorrows of Christ we have the most affecting signs and symbols; but the joy of Christ, and the peace, though he assures us they are real, are as inexpressible and invisible as that breath he breathed upon his disciples when he bade them "receive the Holy Spirit." And those who have followed him, indeed, and have received his spirit, "verily they have their reward."

Do you not know already that in your own lives the most joyful, the most vital and momentous issues are not such events as a biographer might gather, but those crises of conscience, the hours of illumination, inspiration, consecration, when you were lifted above your temptations, and set forward in some way of wider or more faithful service? These are the things "which the Father seeth in secret"; and in your judgment of yourself, in your judgment of others, it is this hidden life which you wish to estimate.

Your life is hid with Christ in God. What is noblest and best, what is most joyful, most divine, in a Christian life, attracts no crowd, wins no applause, is not enrolled and badged in any legion of honor which men can see.

These hidden places of faith, heroism, and forgiving love are like those silent altars where no songs are ever sung, but where we see the burning flame of a Divine Presence never withdrawn, and know that many whispered prayers go up to God.

They are such lonely and shadowy places as that in which the patriarch wrestled with the angel, would not let him go, and was made a Prince ever after; or

as that mountain of transfiguration from which the Christ came down, full of power and authority over all evil things.

Out of these tribulations, out of these joys, come forth the strong souls, in white garments of peace, who praise God, and do him such service as the world can neither wholly hide nor wholly understand.

MY SHELL.

A SHELL upon the sounding sands
Flashed in the sunshine, where it lay:
Its green disguise I tore; my hands
Bore the rich treasure-trove away.

Within, the chamber of the pearl
Blushed like the rose, like opal glowed;
And o'er its domes a cloudy swirl
Of mimic waves and rainbows flowed.

"Strangely," I said, "the artist-worm
Has made his palace-lair so bright!
This jeweller, this draftsman firm,
Was born and died in eyeless night.

"Deep down in many-monstered caves
His miracle of beauty throve;
Far from all light, against strong waves,
A Castle Beautiful he wove.

"Take courage, Soul! Thy labor blind
The lifting tides may onward bear
To some glad shore, where thou shalt find
Light, and a Friend to say, 'How fair!'"

THE DIVIDED LIFE.

“And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many.”—MARK v. 9.

THIS answer of the man of Gadara to Jesus is one of those vivid touches of nature, of which the Gospels are full.

The name “Legion” came from the hated language of the conqueror. It called up, perhaps, some hideous remembrance of the invading army, of homes destroyed, vineyards ravaged, men murdered and women carried away, as the terrible Roman eagles moved on through the Syrian villages. This Legion was a multitude, yet it was one. It spread itself abroad, always irresistible, always with its ranks of fierce faces, its solid lines of shields and spears, bringing consternation as it advanced, and filling the air with tumult and lamentation. What truer or more awful image could express to such a man’s disordered imagination the power which had desolated his life, taken possession of the very citadel of his being, so that now his only thought, his only utterance, is the pitiful cry, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

This sense of a divided life is a kind of hallucination not uncommon. The records of every insane

asylum contain similar cases. One patient believes himself to be also his own brother. Another, with a dual consciousness, passes his plate a second time at table, saying, "I have had enough, but the other one wants more." Other diseased minds assume, in different phases of alienation, totally diverse types of intellect and character, so that the case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is actually realized in such unhappy creatures. It was after this manner that the man of Gadara believed himself divided into a legion of different souls. His consciousness had become (as the modern phrase goes) multiplex.

The story then goes on to tell how this soul of shreds and patches was made whole by the power of Jesus, and sat calmed and clothed at the Great Physician's feet. This, also, has parallels in modern times.

But what most concerns us in the story is not its exceptional and extraordinary character, but that such a distressed, divided life presents to us, in startling shape, an infirmity common to human nature. The line between reason and madness is not easy to draw. The sense of a divided life, which in one organization so far disturbs ordinary speech and conduct as to get the name of disease, in another nature is harmless eccentricity, and in another is a deep-lying duality of consciousness, such as vexed the mighty mind of Paul, and has made some of the most gifted sons of genius confess, with clear-sighted bewilderment, the spiritual enigmas which they found in their own lives. How few minds there are, but hold side by side irrec-

oncilable ideas! How few characters are harmonious!

The divided life, then, is something all men know. It is one of the natural consequences of the law of heredity. The virtues and frailties of all one's ancestry mingle in the blood. The fierce, self-protecting instinct of the savage struggles with the altruistic feeling of a higher manhood. The mental dulness of some grandfather whose life was on the clod, the grossness of a Falstaffian ancestor, the hero-blood of some Pilgrim, the sweetness of some saintly woman, or, it may be, the unquenched aspiration which some forgotten, frustrated life transmitted like a drop of ichor to the blood of its posterity,—such are the spirits which contend for the possession of many a quiet-looking man.

The composite photograph is not more of a medley of faces, than an inherited disposition is a medley of souls. Hence the strife of heart with head, the conflict of human passions with each other; hence it is that some lives are so deeply and consciously divided.

“Oh, what a thing is man! How far from power!

From settled peace and rest!

He is some twenty sev'rall men at least,

Each sev'rall hour.

Oh, what a sight were man, if his attire

Did alter with his mind,

And, like the dolphin's skin, his clothes combined

With his desires!”

How shall these many be made one? What shall give unity to human life? Is not this what religion, what all human wisdom, claims to do?

Now, as the sources of division in our nature are various, so are the remedies; and there are possible for man different ways, higher and lower, of bringing unity into his being.

The lowest way is by the law of self-preservation. This law brings a certain order and harmony into what would otherwise be a mere chaos of appetites. For, even on the plane of the senses, man differs from all other animals, in that his desires are not self-regulative. He does not know by instinct when he has had enough. Each appetite and desire tends to assert itself beyond bounds. This is what is meant, in ancient thought, by the idea that the flesh is essentially evil and at enmity against God. This is the Depravity of Man.

Hence the earliest conception of virtue is moderation, equilibrium, a just compromise between all the desires of our nature. Every passion has its contrary. Sensuality is held in check by ambition, by the need of self-defence, and by the love of power. The desire for glory is modified by reflections concerning the danger and toil of high places,—the sword of Damocles, the weariness of kings. Such is the philosophy of the World. It would regulate human nature not by raising man above himself, but by preserving that self intact and healthful. Its ideal school is a gymnasium; its ideal man, the moral athlete, fully developed, self-commanded, unperturbed. I am sorry for the man who is never attracted by the beauty of this statuesque ideal. This is the peace that sits upon the godlike forms which Phidias and

Praxiteles made. This is the light from Plato's page. This is the vision that was the song and glory of the nobler Greece.

Yet this ideal of a self-regulated virtue was as partial, was as remote from the storm and stress of actual humanity, as the marble hero on his pedestal is different from flesh and blood. It is man as a statue,—a form without power, detached from mother earth; it is virtue without a background; no vastness of light or gloom behind; none of the inward life and outward glory which the Christian painter shows when he pictures the saint or apostle, whose upturned face catches the glow of the surrounding air, whose garments blend with all the hues of earth and heaven; while, in the depths of the picture, the hilltop and shining sea seem to share the one Life Divine, which is here made Man.

Therefore, because this philosophic ideal of culture, of balance, of the happy mean,—this virtue of a Socrates, an Antonine,—was but a partial vision, it could not save, but only adorn the world. The common people could not receive it. The discord in man's nature is too deeply seated for such treatment. He needs not only order and development, but, as it were, a readjustment of all his powers to some higher centre. Some of his strongest tendencies must be eradicated, while other sentiments, naturally the feeblest of all, must become the controlling ones. The constitution of man is not a republic, but a hierarchy. His higher faculties must exert an unconditional authority, while the lower ones can claim only

a provisional and inferior exercise,—as dogs that must live upon remnants only, or dishonest beggars who must stand aside till honest want is fed. In other words, there are qualities and actions in a man which are essential to his humanity, such as faith, honor, duty, truth, and love. There are other qualities and actions which have no such exigent importance, and may even be sacrificed entirely without destroying the glory and the worth of life. Such are physical beauty, strength, and pleasure, the love of praise or power, æsthetic refinement, eloquence, a polished mind,—all that has been called the “World.”

From this view of human nature, as divided into several parts, one necessary and eternal, and the other temporary and unimportant, rose the stern and exalted morality of early Christianity. Regarding human nature as existing in three planes,—spiritual, intellectual, and corporeal,—men endeavored to bring unity into life by making all things spiritual. Not bodily strength, not intellectual acquisition and subtlety, but spiritual activity only, was declared the chief end of our existence. Then followed the ages when a life of unity was sought not by development, but by suppression. The body was persecuted, knowledge was neglected. Both the deceitful senses and the deceitful reason were declared enemies of the soul. There was only one true wisdom,—to know God; only one rightful beauty or joy,—the beauty of holiness and the joy of prayer. For a thousand years the experiment was tried. The old idea of harmonizing human nature as a whole, was aban-

doned. Man was to be changed, born again. Spirituality was to be the principle of unity; and, as a pure spirit, man was to find his peace by passing out of and defying all the limitations of his earth-bound nature. In a figure, or symbol, it was the unity, not of the Greek temple, with its ordered columns and just measurements, but of the Gothic spire rising unsupported to the skies.

Yet the division in man's nature was not healed. The flesh refused to evaporate. Reason would still meet faith with question and analysis. Man's secular life persistently asserted its claim. The sounds of battle clashed close under cloister walls; and kings, in their pride and sensuality, resisted or subsidized the altar and priest. The people made merry on the holy days with feasting most gross and unrestrained. So do they still, when religion would give unity to life only by suppressing all life but that of the soul. But let us be grateful, nevertheless, to that form of Christianity which has established the supreme authority of the spiritual man over every other faculty.

It is to be feared that, in reaction from such a spiritual philosophy, our modern life becomes again bewildered and disorganized. Men wander here and there; yielding now to appetite, now to sentiment; now defying logic, now trusting nothing else; doubting and believing; turning from the extreme of denial to the extreme of dogma, as the mood shall serve. One day they are all for liberty, and no man shall bind them,—no, not with chains; and the next they fall helpless into whatever superstition shall promise

order or prompt to wonder and self-abandonment. The faces that meet us in the street speak seldom of peace and concentration. They are the faces of divided and restless souls. Having divorced faith from conduct, and reason from belief, the venerable tradition of Christianity is with them no longer as the guide and inspiration of all living, but only as one interest among many. The modern world, with its multitude of opinions, its absence of conviction and faith, almost addresses the Church and the ministers of religion in the language of that troubled soul in Gadara: "I adjure thee, thou messenger of the Most High, that thou torment me not."

To this disordered humanity come doctors not a few. Here are the old pagan formulas again,—culture, development, to give flesh its dues, and let all the powers work together for good for them that love human nature. But some of us who belong to the priestly caste (which has so long kept watch and record of man's spiritual experiments) are of the opinion that this medicine has been tried, and has failed. It will help the healthy, but not heal the sick. Culture cannot give unity to divided souls. It can refine the separate faculties, but not give authority to any. It can apply a feeble comeliness to the exterior, but not create the life within, from which all beauty flows. The power which can make life whole, the standard of perfection, the method of attaining it, must come to a man from some deeper and more vital source.

Then appears, in many shapes, that other old coun-

sel, "Let man be spirit, and spirit only!" Renounce, suppress, sacrifice, be nothing but a soul! And again, as before, this answer will not ring true to all the facts of man's life: "The flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." The division and inward warfare goes on (save with a few rare natures) as much in the cloister as in the world; as much with Thomas à Kempis or George Herbert, in their spiritual wrestlings, as with the perplexed mind of the worldling or the philosopher.

But, through all the tumult of our time, we see many tokens that the reconciling truth has come; and we feel that the unity of life cannot come to Man out of the development of his whole nature, nor out of the exaltation of any part of it. Unity must come as man's response,—a response of his whole being, to the unity of God. Just as, when you reach the top of a mountain, the landscape you have seen by glimpses is joined together under one dome of sky, so, when faith reaches the height of unbroken vision, it gathers all our life in one, under the Divine, over-arching Love.

Jesus, by revealing God the Father, the indwelling Spirit, and calling us to be the sons of God, gives to Man's life, in the highest degree, a power of order and unity.

He gives us a controlling truth, a controlling purpose, a controlling affection.

When once a man has taken up his life, as Jesus reveals it, as part of the Divine Order and the Divine Life, he feels the unity of his life. In all its many-

sidedness, in all its activities which seem to move to different objects, he finds only a diversity of communication with the same Being,—with God, with the Father. He knows, then, that his many faculties have a common aim. Just as his senses,—sight, sound, touch,—so different that none can do the other's work, bring home to his mind one unanimous report, and reveal to him in many ways the same world of facts, so all his human susceptibilities—body, mind, soul, heart, conscience—are different ways of receiving God, and all work together to make known the Divine Father to his child.

This perception of the unity of life in divine truth, was what gave its marvellous power to the teaching of Jesus. He saw, as other men did not, the larger meaning of things. A woman drawing water, children asking for a piece of bread, men planting, harvesting, buying and selling, feasting, going to the wedding,—all these spoke to him of one comprehensive reality, the love of God for men, and the life of God in them.

Even where our vision does not rise like his to the knowledge of God, it is unspeakable gain for any life to have this central perception of the unity of truth. Let an uneducated person examine the shelves of a great university library.* What a chaos it seems! What far-fetched, impossible topics! What wagon-loads of volumes, useless, he thinks, which no one will ever read! But to the educated man this labyrinth of books is the visible symbol of the ideal for which the university exists. For a university means

*The sermon was preached at Harvard.

that all human knowledge is systematized, logically distributed, in an intellectual organism, in the unity of truth. You and I will never read many of those books. You and I will never get into our heads much of the wide-ranged and many-chambered truth which a great university accumulates. But what dignity it gives to our personal studies, what joy we have in our little researches, our little discoveries, when we know that our broken fragments of truth have their place, have their subordination and dependency, in this large-proportioned structure of human knowledge! The unity of our intellectual life is not in ourselves: it is larger; it is in our relation to the Universal Mind.

But this intellectual ideal of unity, venerable as it is, does not satisfy the whole man. We have something to live for besides thinking and seeing. We must act, we must feel. Deeper than intelligence is our duty. Higher and broader than all thought, is the claim of the heart, the love of Christ that "passeth knowledge."

To the ideal of intellectual unity we dedicate the university. But close by it, yet more far-reaching, more widely and deeply human, is the institution which stands for the unity of all life in God, the fellowship of faithful souls, which is the Church. In the conflict of opinions concerning the externalities of Christian institutions, we often forget that the Church is founded upon the living God. It is man's acceptance of the divine life; and, as each man recognizes in his reason the light of divine truth, in

his conscience God's righteous law, in his heart the beginnings of a love like God's, he is thereby joined to the brotherhood of souls who share his faith. The life of each in God, and God in all,—that is what the Church of Christ signifies. Do you not feel how to each man's life this Christian faith gives that controlling purpose which makes for order and harmony, even in the most distracted soul? It makes a divided, aimless man responsive through and through to the touch of an Infinite Perfection. "Ye shall be called the children of the Highest."

In everything we do the alternative is offered between mere whim and self-will, and the divine, the perfect, the highest good. My humblest duty may be a witness of divine perfection, if only it be the best offering I can make. For every soul, at every instant, there is this choice between the upward effort for perfection, and the downward lapse to ease and self-pleasing. This perfection is not of your making or mine. Most often it is contrary to our desires, and higher than our imagination wholly grasps. It is the will of God, the pure truth shining in the mind, or, as Paul loved to say, "the righteousness of God," taking possession of ours.

Hence the difference between the pagan and the Christian mind: the former seeks perfection in the separate deed or creature, to perfect the individual self, to finish and refine. The Christian loves that perfection which is of God; *i.e.*, the perfect union of man with man, of the human with the divine. The perfection of a Christian is like the excellence of glass, transparency to divine light.

Why does it belittle Jesus to call him a virtuous man? Because the virtue of Christ is not a separate and self-adorning virtue. The goodness of Christ is his affinity with all good. And so the Christian ideal is not the culture of the individual: it is to render every man a transmitter of the divine light and goodness which shines for all. "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Now, when this love of perfection seizes any soul, and when the soul sees that perfection is not in a part, but in the whole, this passion is called the love of God.

So it is that a life upon this Christ-like plane, dominated by one truth and one purpose, is pervaded by one controlling affection. It has the secret of inward joy.

Here, then, is remedy for the life that is "Legion." For there is nothing in our lives that may not unite to the Divine Order, and the lives of our fellow-men. Broken though our lives may be, in themselves, we can join them, part by part, instant by instant, to the Divine Completeness which embraces us.

It is the way of Christ himself. How varied was the Master's life,—now a carpenter; then a fisherman; a teacher; then lifted to be a people's hero, and a people's sacrifice! Now he was in the wilderness; then in the city; then wandering through the countryside. Yet what a unity was his life, every act, every word, receiving the mysterious seal of his personality!

This unity of life the intellect alone cannot

achieve: it is from the heart, the will, the inner man. Just as the lily in the field, having life within, gets life from every wind of heaven, expands in sun and shower, attaining so the harmonious proportions God has given it; so a true man, inwardly responsive to all the powers of God, grows up into harmony and peace, into a unity which is not Man's achievement, but the Divine Law and Image shining through and overruling all the separated elements.

Man in himself is "Legion:" surrendered to the Divine Life, he is a centralized spirit. We say that personality moves the world. This is the kind of personality which does so. Large as you can, diversified as God permits, but a life harmonized because rooted and grounded in God.

Many lives with the richest endowments and opportunities are useless and impotent; for there is no power without unity, and a house divided against itself cannot stand. The victorious lives are not those of men who have the most various original gifts, but rather the lives in which the whole man is gathered together, body, mind, soul, and spirit, and quickened through with Life Divine.

THINE AND MINE.

I LONG did roam afar from home,
My proud heart could not guide me,
Till the King of Heaven sent down
One to walk beside me.

No glory shone his way upon,
No monarch's crown adorned him:
Love discerned her humble king,
Though the blind world scorned him.

To my dear King some gift to bring
I sought to buy or borrow:
"Give me, child, thy heart," said he,—
I was filled with sorrow.

Again I heard his gracious word,
"A place for thee I'm keeping":
Dumbly, still, my fearful heart
Waited, doubting, weeping.

"Turn not away," he seemed to say,
And drew me gently near him:
Love like this I ne'er had known,—
Who could longer fear him?

His eyes divine looked love in mine,
His tears with mine were blended.

"O my king, I nothing bring:
Thine and mine are ended."

A REFUGE AND STRENGTH.

“God is our refuge and our strength.”—Ps. xli. 1.

THERE are two things a father can do for a child: he can protect him from danger, he can give him the necessary means of self-protection. Every wise father will do both. In many cases, he will respect the weakness of the child; and, while the storm howls by or the battle rages, he is content to keep the little one in shelter and in ignorance, as a mountain shepherd covers the lamb with his mantle, and carries him blinded along the edge of the precipice. But also there are many occasions when the wise father will not permit his children to remain passive and dependent under the stress of difficulty. He encourages them to action and strife. Less anxious to calm their fears than to urge them to self-defence, he permits them to see the full magnitude of their peril, and even exaggerates it. Both of these cases are paralleled in the dealings of the divine Father with ourselves.

In regard to many dangers by which we are surrounded, it is obvious that, owing to our weakness and ignorance, we can in no manner cope with them,

and must often be unaware of their existence. Our finite human nature is thrown over us (like the mantle on the lamb), concealing wholly from our eyes the abysses by which we tread. The number and narrowness of our hair-breadth escapes we shall never know. By a slight exercise of the imagination we easily discern the manifold perils to which we are ever liable. It is said that many persons studying for the first time the physiology of the human body are seized with distressful apprehensions. The vital processes are so delicate, it seems an even chance whether they continue or not. A slight humor in the eye, and behold, our sight is gone! The act of swallowing puts us on the edge of strangulation. At every violent effort or emotion it is a miracle that half our blood-vessels do not burst. But these morbid reflections of the amateur anatomist are soon dispelled, not indeed by clearer knowledge, but by deeper trust. Our refuge from such thoughts is the general beneficence and wholesomeness of existence. From our immense ignorance of the laws of life, we take refuge in a simple trust and acceptance of life itself. We fly from the particular to the universal, from the finite, partial facts to the all-embracing activity of God. Every increase of knowledge uncovers to our limited vision a multitude of dangers. Our knowledge of astronomy, for example, shows this earth of ours as but a wandering atom in infinity. Who knows the spaces we explore, and what they hold? Why not tomorrow a plunge into some nebulous interstellar fog-bank, some comet's gaseous envelope that should blast

the earth like an exhalation from a chemist's retort? We have seen other suns, in the starry throng, clash together and disappear. Why should not this sun of ours one day meet his match, and perish in the collision? Yet what sound human mind ever seriously entertains such fears? As against such catastrophes we have no power of self-defence, we do not consider them. We take refuge in God. He calleth the stars by name. The starry heaven is his, and he made it. There is no chance or discord there. We sail with our little planet-barge through those unfathomable seas, where planets and galaxies lie as islands and continents in the voiceless space; and we say that "all is well." Feeble and dim is the little headlight of our human reason that peers into the darkness, and yet we have no fear. *God* is our refuge. We can trust the Author of the universe as against our imperfect knowledge of any portion of it. The sight of *parts* fills us with misgiving: our intuition of the whole restores our trust, and makes us sane again.

Most men indeed are not conscious how this trust that we live not in a universe of quicksand, but in an honest and friendly environment, is the background of all reasonable living. But to be without it would be lunacy. It is the "master-light of all our seeing"; the presupposition of all knowledge; the truth without which no other truth could be known. As we trust our bodies that they are made for life; and our solar system that it is made for stability, and our own reasoning faculties that they are capable of truth: so in spiritual matters, in all the seeming chaos or labyrinth

of the moral order, we have the same intuition of the overruling God, in whom our refuge is.

Consider man as a spiritual being. Look into your own heart and discover there the possibilities of moral disorder, the knife-edge line that severs virtue from vice, the multiplied ingenuity of sin, the slippery ease of descent, the strenuous requirements of good: will you not wonder that in the frailty of our natures any soul has won its way to holiness of life? Who that knows his own heart but fears the power of evil there? Or, look at human society! See the seeming success of selfishness and low aims. See virtue blush, and vice walk by with brow of brass. Who can say of his own observation that the wicked are like chaff, which the wind driveth away?

In the press of this power of evil upon the soul, men take refuge in God. They believe that right is stronger, though they cannot prove it. They trust an overruling righteousness. We have this feeling and this experience in our own lives. As the apostle says, "Brethren, if our hearts accuse us, God is greater than our hearts." God, therefore, is the refuge of human souls against self-reproach. There is no doubt that increasing spiritual knowledge usually increases in men the sense of their own unworthiness. The self-complacent souls are not those who have in them the knowledge of God. Nor do we get our deepest acquaintance with the nature of sin from the brutal and the degraded. Rather it is from apostles and martyrs, from the virgin-hearts of youth, from unworldly minds and untainted lips, we hear the passion-

ate voice of confession, the pleading prayer for divine forgiveness and help. Where this purity of vision, this hunger after righteousness goes, as sometimes it does, without the mated growth of the religious life, there we see morbid activities, over-conscientiousness, self distrust, and, it may be, despair. Without refuge in God, no awakened conscience can bear the stress of the conflict of good and evil in the human soul. If, however, the self-despising, self-tormenting soul can break through the narrow area of its self-conscious perplexities, if, taking refuge in God, it views its inner strife as part of his unfolding plan, and can trust the victory of goodness as having Omnipotence behind it,—how different the temper of the daily life! Then shall we see the striving of flesh against spirit, not as unintelligible chaos in ourselves, but as the operation of a Divine Order bringing into a human soul a harmony and excellence which of itself it could not achieve. We take refuge from the burden of personal sinfulness in the deeper insight that we are the children of God, and that all the discipline of our failure and shame is not intended to destroy us, but to cast us more utterly upon divine aid, and to bring us back by wholesome suffering to the way of God, who desireth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

God is our refuge, then, both where reason leads us into perplexity and where conscience betrays us into self-contempt. So

“We love to feel God’s greatness
Round about our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness, his rest.”

This is natural religion. No school can teach it, no philosophy put it into propositions. It is simply the rest of the child in his Father’s house, the sense of submission and dependence, of safety and peace, which men may possess in the presence of the great mysteries of life and death, in the presence of war, danger, confusion, perplexity; when human nature feels its littleness, and feels itself floating in the unfathomable, yet knows itself, all the while, as dwelling in security under the protection of a “faithful Creator.”

But this passive element of faith demands fulfilment in an active element. God is our refuge, but he is also our strength. While in the thought of his perfect goodness and providence we escape the terrors of existence, yet, to meet our lot as men and women, we need such faith as gives us not only calmness, but vigorous capacity of resistance and effort. We need a *living* God, whose goodness is not only in the whole, but in the parts, and can be manifested to us not only at the last day, but also now, in all the conflicts and difficulties of our present life. God’s dealings with us in this regard are like those of the human father, who permits his child to see, meet, and resist the dangers to which he is exposed.

But he has not left us to unaided combat. God is our strength, and a very present help in time of trouble.

God has appointed to every man two forms of conflict, one with the outward conditions of life,—the strife with Nature and circumstances,—and the other with sin in himself.

The conflict with Nature we share with all other animals. It is our struggle for existence, owing to the difficulty of maintaining life upon this planet. Hence toil, sweat, anxiety, the pangs of poverty, the dread of destitution, which make the master-passions of all those who share the average lot of mankind. All the operations of business are, in the last analysis, parts of this world-wide struggle. The bringing of food and merchandise from distant lands, all the processes of invention and manufacture, the development of new sources of wealth,—all these things are but a part of man's subjugation of natural forces. All persons expediting these labors, whether it be the coal-bearer at the docks or the railroad president at his desk, are fellow-combatants in the primeval struggle of man against the resistance of nature to his will.

How, then, in this kind of contest is it true that God is our strength? Simply in the sense that all victory must come through the laying hold of some divine *law*. Only by stern loyalty to truth, and fact, does man's labor conquer. No self-deception is excused, no evasion allowed. Man's strength in this contest is his grasp of truth, his exact obedience to the conditions in which he finds himself. It is in this conformity to the terms of the strife, this lawful striving for the mastery, that we achieve the health

and sanity of our being. Through this process is God creating us. We may not know, while we toil the mountain steep, that all the while our frame is growing stronger, our blood purer, our brains clear and calm; but so it is; and so, in the stern exercise of our whole being against difficulty, the necessity is beneficently invigorating the spiritual tissue. On this plane we may have God for our strength, before we know his name. Why? Because, having allied ourselves to his method of creation, we are receiving of his life.

Many people think of God only as the Father, only as love, mercy, and forgiveness. But we must know him first as *Law* and *Truth*. He is not only a Father, but our Creator, and the indwelling cause of all our life. Refuse the necessary and natural conditions of human life, and you are thereby excluded from the operations of the Divine Spirit, which come only through these conditions. You become spiritually undersized. To be exempted from this battle of labor, from this strife of man with nature, is not a privilege, but a disease. How can men get knowledge of God, or receive of God as their strength, when they are living a life of unnatural idleness? It is when life is real, serious, forceful, intense, courage high and action enthusiastic, that God enters in, or, rather, he is already with us; for the whole order of life with its law is but an expression of his will; and the soul of man, when fulfilling its true constitution as God has made it, then reflects his image, receives of his spirit, and is sustained by his life and power. The more

spiritual life in us, the more activity of will and heart and mind, the more of the power of God which worketh in us to will and to do. Sometimes, as the waves toss the strong swimmer to the surface and waft him onward, when another would have perished, so the stress and storm of human life, all its toil, excitement, intensity of hope and fear, call forth the hidden energies of our being, and cast us upon the tides of power divine, by which we are carried forward in safety to fulfil our destiny as immortal creatures, in whom the life and strength of God are working to the divine end of spiritual perfection.

But, finally, God is our strength in the battle of the soul with sin. Our first strength is that evil itself is a finite thing. God has bounded its course. All our power is for good: all our instincts and faculties are fitted to divine ends. What we need is fulfilment, and the only remedy for what we call evil is "life more abundantly." The spirit of disorder is the spirit of weakness. Sin is failure, evil is perversion; and, though we have violated the divine order, it still environs us. Though we have misused our powers, the ends for which they were given still exist; and the aptitudes are not wholly lost. "Let us strengthen the things which remain." We have followed the devices of our own hearts, which were illusions; but the Truth which we should have followed is stronger than these. Whenever we resist an evil thought or do anything that is good, we are allying ourselves with Omnipotence. By evil choice we thwart, check, or deform the unfolding of the divine

image in us; but let the evil resistance be withdrawn, let the will ally itself to righteousness, and then the operation of the divine life goes on enlarging,—that is to say, our good choices, our righteous acts, bring interest, being multiplied like seed in the ground by the co-working with them of all the laws of God.

What we ask of the sinful will is that it shall stand aside, and let the Holy Spirit do its work. Hence it is that once we have set ourselves in line with goodness, and have hungered and thirsted after it, we are already certain to be saved from the power and destruction of evil. Doing right, we have God with us; and, loving righteousness, we are already under the influence of life-giving and multiplying power.

But you may say, Does not evil multiply also? Does not sin wax energetic with years? In a sense, yes. In our souls, evil confirmed by habit grows stronger, grows easier of commission, more difficult of suppression. But there is no strength of God in it. All the laws of the universe are against it; and, therefore, the more sin strengthens in the sinful heart, the weaker it becomes for battle with the realities of existence. The greater the sin, the greater the obstacles offered to committing it. When sin is finished, it bringeth forth death, becomes simply powerless: it cannot cope with truth, and survive. But righteousness is made stronger by every contact with the laws of existence. Within the soul it is aided by God: outside the soul it is aided by all the laws and conditions of his universe.

And also God is our strength in the contest with

sin, not only by re-enforcing our wills within us, and giving us laws which favor the righteous upon earth, but also because from God to man there are ever-descending visions of higher righteousness and purer truth. No man has got so far in holiness, but God, through the voice of conscience, can show him a better than his present attainment. He is our hope and inspiration. Whenever we are refreshed and stimulated by new incentives to goodness, such quickening is of God. He *leads* us. He sets before us a land of promise, and comforts us with increasing visions of glory. The Divine Teacher and Revealer never permits us to sink into dull and spiritless obedience. Sin loses in time its power to fascinate and interest us: it ends in utter stagnation and coldness, and finally can promise us nothing more. But righteousness is ever-increasing life, from which hope can never pass away. Our God is an enlarging giver; and following him, we go from strength to strength. He confirms our feeble purposes by introducing us into all the glory of his kingdom. Could we feel in any due sense this glorious promise of our inheritance as children of God, could we see with opened spiritual eye how every step toward goodness leads us on to freer obedience, to gladder holiness, to more delightful and inspiring service, until existence itself shall be praise, and (like theirs who stand before the throne of God) we should move, not with languid acquiescence, but with eager haste, with passionate devotion, take our places in the army of God, and go on to victory. We should "run and not be weary, we should walk and not faint."

I know of nothing more wonderful than God's way of refreshing the hearts of his children by gospel after gospel. Just as in the world's history, when some old faith languishes or dies, some grander, larger faith steals into the hearts of men and takes its place, so to each man's life, when he has been faithful to his earlier visions, come new hopes, new duties, and higher aspirations. Just as Peter in his despondency, bred of his narrow Judaism, saw, let down from heaven, the symbols of a wider gospel, wherein was neither clean nor unclean, how often is it given to faithful souls, when some cherished creed, some old duty or hope, is losing its quickening power, to receive some fresh illumination, which brings new strength from God! Let us be watchful for such visitations to our souls. It may come to you in the speaking solitude of prayer, or after some task well done, or where some friendly soul communicates to you its deeper life-secret.

So God shall strengthen you by letting you move on from the exhausted fountains of your past, and go from strength to strength, as, like the tired mountaineer, you see the horizons widen round you, and, forgetting the things behind, press forward with joy into the larger place.

THE LILY AND THE PINE.

I FOUND a lily near my door,
Which bloomed an hour, then bloomed no more;
And her pure-hearted perfectness
My heart did bless.

I saw, high up the mountain cold,
A pine a hundred winters old;
For his strong-hearted patience there
I breathed a prayer.

O hour of sweetly-breathing life!
O century of strength and strife!
I only know that in each one
God's will was done.

EZEKIEL'S VISION.

1. "Now it came to pass, . . . as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

19. "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. . . .

24. "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host. . . .

26. "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne. . . .

28. "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."—EZEK. i.

IN the visions of Ezekiel the spirit of prophecy borders upon madness. His message breaks in upon his soul clothed in symbolism as gorgeous and terrible as that city of Babylon in which the Hebrew captives, by the river of Chebar, sat down to mourn. The Assyrian chariots and cherubs sweep stormily through the prophet's dreams: their cloudy shapes are full of sound and flame and swiftness. Yet above the terror and lamentation, above the blazing wheels and the noise of their wings, above the "great waters" and confusion of strange tongues, Ezekiel, the prophet-priest, beholds at last the throne of God, the divine glory, and the rainbow encircling all.

Sometimes out of the record of these visions, so mysterious, so extravagant, come strains of clear spiritual truth, which strike upon the reader's heart as a human, friendly voice, which one might hear across the smoke and roar of a battlefield. We learn that, out of a great despair, a brother-soul saw the heavens open, and looked upon God. This people, Israel, captive by the river of Chebar, this nation of forlorn hopes, which rose out of its ruined glory to a vision of the Most High and ever-merciful God, speaks to us by its prophet-voices in words that will never die. The captive's song, the captive's vision, the faith that is born of sorrow, the courage unconquerable that is given to the children of God when every earthly hope is faded,—such are the treasures, such the messages, that are contained for us in this wonderful Bible, and in almost every book it holds.

This vision of Ezekiel, then, fantastic in its form, and full of images as uncouth and barbaric as the age from which it sprung, contains precious instruction. We see the Man of God confronted by a situation in which all the traditions of his fathers, all the faith and worship of his youth, seem useless and false. He had believed that God could deliver Israel from all extreme harm, and now the city of David is no more. He had worshipped with the priesthood of the sons of Levi, and now the temple in Zion is polluted and overthrown. Ezekiel, the young priest, by the river of Chebar, has before his eyes a world more strange to him than the remotest city on earth could now be to any of us. Babylon, "the glory of the

Chaldees' excellency," with her star-gazing and idolatry, her sensuality, splendor, and tyranny, seems to him altogether cruel, godless, abominable, incomprehensible. It does not concern us now that there were good men even in Babylon, that there was mercy in her kings, and wisdom among her scholars. Ezekiel's situation as a captive there resembles that of some pure-minded, devout youth who should be suddenly set down in this city of ours, in a position which allowed him to see only what is shameless, cruel, and unjust in this great machine which we call civilization. He seemed to see a whole population violating all that he held sacred, practising openly vices which he despised, scorning his simple religion and pure-mindedness, and following after a religion and a life which seemed to him wholly monstrous and wicked. Yet, after all, this Babylon was a success. Her cruel armies came back with victory and plunder. The sapphire skies and all-beholding stars still shed their holy light over the shameless palaces where Babylon covered herself with jewels, and slaves poured forth the perfumed wine. We may well believe that the spectacle bewildered, but did not charm or cheer him. The wine-cup of tyrants seemed to brim over with blood. The precious ointments, embroideries, and soft array, the music and the feast, appeared to his devout and manly soul as the wages of sin, or as the false, painted beauty by which a deadly enchantress entices her victims to their ruin.

How modern it all is! What an eternal type of the spiritual in man confronting with bewilderment and horror the successful achievements of worldliness!

There must be moods in the life of every thoughtfully religious man when such a spectacle confronts and overwhelms him. Every servant of God must see but too clearly that the kingdom of God is not come, nor the divine will done upon earth.

But it is only a very great and rare soul which, seeing this sad truth, can so begin to receive new and higher visions of God; and the man who does so receive them, becomes indeed a prophet, and the helper of every human soul which feels the sadness of a world without God, and which, when God is hidden, no pomp and glory of this world can satisfy.

Let us see, then, what these visions of Ezekiel may mean for us, although that Babylon, which bewildered and saddened him, long since has vanished away. For our modern life needs such message from on high. Our faith like his is confronted with many a worshipped idol of men's hands, many a successful iniquity, many a shape of human art and science, wheel within wheel and flame over flame, which, though splendid, terrible, and strong, seems to bring no glad tidings to the soul.

Now (first of all) we may see in Ezekiel's visions that these vast flaming cherubim, the powers and elements that make up our world, all move in ordered flight. Their wings are numbered. Each wing keeps its place and use, and all the wings and all the wheels rise and fall together. This perception of an ordered creation, a rhythmic assembly of powers, so familiar to us, was the beginning of Ezekiel's hope.

Science gives us the word "law"; but the word

seems cold and comfortless. We have half lost the wonder and the mystery of it. Yet, wherever a man comes to a real personal vision of the ordered world, and bravely faces it, looking beneath the noise and dazzling fire, is he not already upon the threshold of religious inspiration? Let a man in his calamity, his disease, his sin, rise for a moment above himself, and let him see himself and his trouble as a part of an ordered world! It is not a full consolation, but it is surely the beginning of strength.

Our own time is characterized by an enlarged perception of law as it is found in human life itself. We can see how disease, terrible as it is, is no haphazard danger, but has its own laws as much as health; and both in its origin and end can be more and more studied, watched, and foretold. When we want a remedy, it is indeed but a small thing to know the pathology of a morbid condition; but even pathology is something. The doctors and surgeons of the soul are extending continually our knowledge of the laws which govern soul life. They measure sensation; take the temperature of genius when it burns; trace the history of vice and virtue; show that what a man soweth he shall also reap,—he and his children to the third generation. Every crime has its cause, its order of development, and its necessary end. Every criminal is an illustration of mental and psychical laws as they appear in moral weakness and decay. All in human nature that most bewilders and saddens the observer — every eccentricity, vice, weakness, madness, crime — may be viewed in large relations and under general

laws of life. To a philosopher all this is interesting. To all of us it is important. The moralist, the educator of youth, the statesman, and all who must daily study human nature, are coming in these days to such a perception of law in the growth and motion of a human soul.

At first, when this great truth confronts our religious faith, we seem to have lost something. Freedom seems overthrown, and moral aspiration unsubstantiated. We thought the human soul its own master and king. Now we find it bound to mysterious wheel on wheel of order and necessity.

And, if the vision ended so, the loss would be real indeed. Therefore, afterward, in the later visions of Ezekiel, when he beholds the glory of God, the passing away of Babylon and Egypt and Tyre, when he sees the restoration of Zion, with its temple of beautiful praise, where song and offering shall be forevermore,—in all these glowing vistas of prophecy, he comes back again to his old first wonder at the river Chebar, of the living creatures and the wheels.

“And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.” Always the living thing and the machinery, the one in the other, never separated, never resting. For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

It is well for us also if our sight of the law and mechanism of the world still leaves our eyes unblinded to the life that is, and always must be, within the mechanism.

Such, we may understand, was the second great truth in Ezekiel's symbolism. The first was order, the second was life.

More and more our modern world is coming to feel the higher truth that this universe we look upon, so glorious in order and power, is no dead, senseless thing. It is alive. Life is within it, and life streams forth from all its infinitely varied motions. So with the world of men of which we are a part. Study as you will the laws of human body, of the human soul, and of human society. Show how the brain grows like a flower; show by what terrible or merciful destiny every human life is pervaded. But do not forget that all this is a study of life.

Do not let your philosophy, your psychology and pathology, make you forget that you are, in all these, the student of life, and that life is a mystery which no science has fathomed.

Even if nature be "bound fast in fate," yet nature is full of joy, full of pain, full of expanding power. Even if Man were really but a creature of circumstances, yet human life is holy, and demands love, pity and awe in every manifestation of it. It is not always easy for the man who sees clearly and inexorably the great fact of law, to see also the great fact of life. Some men think they have said it all when they have described the case and written out its formula. But it is not so with the man whose whole nature is awake and receptive. Take, for example, the good physician, that type of human excellence which Saint Luke felt to be an adequate description of his Master.

The wise doctor faces the facts in all their sternness and significance. Some men may be hardened by too much study of the mechanism of life; but it is not so as a rule. The good physician rises above that; and though first of all a man of science, has at the same time a profound sense that in all his work he is dealing with life, not with automata, but with his fellow-creatures. Rising above the aimless and ineffectual sympathy of inexperience, he moves about his world of pain and sorrow as a father and a friend, always illuminating his knowledge of medicine by an insight deeper still into the lives, the feelings of the patients; until his science becomes an art, and his ministrations are not only to the body, but to the mind and soul.

It seems to me, that whatever a man's calling, there should come to him, in some way, an ascent from the vision of law to the vision of the life within the law.

Men try in many ways to express this vision.

Consider our knowledge of Nature. The man of science comes with his analysis, his explanation. Everything is catalogued, photographed, set in relation to facts most distant and unexpected. We learn how the sun and stars grow old; how the earth was clothed upon, age after age, with fern or snow; with forest or with bog; what islands rose and fell; what lost species are buried in the rocks; how civilizations bloom and pass away, like flowers in the changing year. Then after science, with its maps and measures, follows the deeper insight of the poet, "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

Just after the great science of the eighteenth century, came not only new discoverers, but also Goethe, Wordsworth and Shelley, and, in our time, Tennyson, our own Emerson, and Browning. At the very time that clearer interpretations appeared of Nature as law and mechanism, these minds of finer receptiveness were giving us new interpretations of Nature as life, beauty, and joy. We might add the whole range of modern art, music, and higher literature. Everywhere there is a vision, dim indeed, but confident, of the "spirit within the wheels," of the one life in Nature and in Man. The poetry and music and deeper thought are helping men to the sense that this new world which science finds, where the old faiths lie captive and lamenting, is not a world all alien and terrible; but that our human lives can rise into harmony with its glorious order, that the heavens are vaster and the earth holier than what our fathers knew.

You may say this is poetry, not religion; but it is an element of religion, and essentially so. The Bible is largely a poem. The prophetic lyric has no superior in any literature; for poetry is not rhyme or measure, but a presentation of the ideal aspects of life.

Some men lose wholly this higher range of truth. In the great patient mind of Darwin, we have the classic example of a mind ever occupied in scientific investigation, which lost not only faith, but also all sense of ideal beauty, being no longer moved by "concord of sweet sounds" or by the finer and loftier emotions which art and beauty give. It was as if an anatomist should lose the capacity of falling in love.

For science is analysis, of the understanding only; but poetry, like love and religion, is always synthesis, the flowing together of noble feelings, which makes a wider horizon for the enthusiastic soul. To those who can only "peep and botanize" the wild-rose has never breathed its true story. The mighty heavens have revealed their glory, not through every telescope, but only to the great astronomer, for whom their exactitude and infinity make some celestial music; a music which awes and purifies his listening heart, and reveals at once the nothingness of his material being, (his body an atom in space,) and the sublimity of that spiritual power by which he explores immensity, and brings back knowledge across spaces and times before which his imagination reels. Analysis destroys.

"Er hat die Theilen in seiner Hand,
Fehlt, leider! nur das geistige Band."

But imagination rebuilds. Love, thought, and faith rejoin the sundered sky, and bring back peace to the bewildered soul.

Nor does such vision of the life "within the wheels," shine only for the scholar in his world of thought. It is the necessity of the humblest man or woman.

How are you taking up your life and your duty every day? Is it all detail, all drudgery? Or do you sometimes rise out of many small duties and small daily cares to the sense that in all these things you are living your life faithfully and lovingly? Each day

brings you its fresh task. But is there a spirit which runs through all the days, a unity of purpose and affection in which your life is growing richer and stronger year by year? Really, is not that what we value and honor in any man's life on earth? When a man dies, and we ask each other what he was, what he did, and why we loved him, then all the details and separate acts of his career are lost and almost forgotten; and what remains is the spirit of the life, which we recognize in some inexplicable way. Even though we cannot tell the story of our departed friend, we know what he was and how he lived. Your character is strong or weak, noble or shallow, as there is in you this quality which is higher and more precious than the things you are doing and the words you say. Your words die away in silence very soon. Your little achievements do not last. Already you have lived long enough to see much that you have done melt and vanish on the stream of time; but the spirit of your life is ever going on. It is growing and operating in you to-day and to-morrow, and it is influencing every human creature you have to do with; and, therefore, you need day by day to know not only the mechanism of your life, but the living source and inspiration of it. Your hearts burn within you when this deeper consciousness is given, when you feel the "spirit within the wheels." Then your drudgery becomes noble patience, faithfulness, and growing power. Then your accuracy and painstaking to make your work fair, true and strong, is lifted into self-respect and loving service. Then standing at your post

of duty, and struggling with whatever storms may blow, as the great forces of the universe sweep around you, you get the peace and the simplicity of Nature into your heart; and you are at home in this wide world of God, as much as a star is happy in its course, or a tree firm and steadfast on its windy mountain.

Our prophet's vision by the river Chebar has, then, two solemn lessons for all time. When the world bewilders you, when faith is shaken and hope overclouded, the beginning of new strength is along these lines. There is a harmonious order and an indwelling life around you. Take this order and this life into yourself.

Enter into obedience. Enter into fuller life. Even in to-day's duty, and to-morrow's, let there be more of discipline and method; but rise above that, and by means of it, into nobler, sweeter, happier living.

Is it not with such faithfulness that our knowledge of God must begin?

Out of this experience and this vision comes the yet holier truth, which even the prophet can only utter by the imperfect symbol that over it all, over the mystery of flame and force, over cherubim with lamps and wheels and rush of wings "as of a mighty host," is the "appearance of a throne" and "the glory of the Lord."

Nothing can be clearer than the effort of Ezekiel to say that all his language in this revelation of the Most High is pure symbol and allegory. He does not say that God is power; that human nature inter-

prets the divine nature; or that God is to the soul as light to the bodily eye. He says: "I see a throne. I see the likeness of a man. I see glory and a fire around the throne, and around the man." We must let a prophet choose his own medium of communication.

Very different from some scholastic theologies is the awe-struck vagueness of these expressions of the man who, by the river Chebar, had a genuine, personal "vision of God"; and "when I saw it," he says, "I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."

Strange and childlike — barbarous, if you will — is the story of Ezekiel's inspired hour.

But it matters little under what form or name a man thinks of God, so long as under any form or name he knows in the depths of his nature that God *is*, and that God speaks to *him*.

Such knowledge is possible to each one of us. It comes out of the deep places of human experience, even out of sin and sorrow. It crowns our noblest striving. It illuminates and interprets our highest thinking. Our fullest and most sensitive living is only complete, when it leads up to this immediate revelation of the divine life to ours. Never let yourself believe that this vision of God's throne has been denied to the times in which we live; that God showed himself to men of old and is hidden now forever. Men see God to-day just as truly as in the age of Ezekiel. His prophets have spoken "since the world began," and they will speak till the world shall end.

The age of faith is never past. There is "faith on the earth" now, and always.

We have in our generation a triumphant science of material things. We have with that, the thrilling consciousness of life, which fills whole nations with eager hopes, and which pours itself out in our passionate literatures. But all this new knowledge and these "fair humanities" are not a substitute for religion. They lead up to it. They make it necessary. And, therefore, we have our prophets, who can look at "law" in Nature and see the "throne of God" above the law; who can look at our civilization with its roaring wheels, its forceful, masterful energy, and see in it and above it the presence of the Divine Life.

The troubles and unbelief of our modern time do not mean that God has hid himself. They mean that men are feeling, more than formerly, the difficulty of reconciling this intense and complicated modern life with the sublime, simple faith in God. We see Babylon, so mighty and strange. We see God's throne over all. But we need some Ezekiel, it may be, to show the connection, so that we may see both the earthly and heavenly fact in one simultaneous vision.

Is not this the "burden" of all modern prophecy? Is it not the central concern of every religious life? You believe in God. You cannot help it. You see the great forces of Nature and the great passions of humanity laboring, like chariot and cherub, in their mysterious courses. The only kind of religion that can meet your spiritual needs is a faith which can lift

up the world to God, and which can see God coming down into the world to rule it in righteousness.

More and more this is the message of Christianity to-day: that all the world, even Babylon, is under God's throne, that his law, his life, his victorious love, overrules all.

NOVEMBER.

THE bare November, like a stern divine,
Frowned on my soul, discoursing of decay,
Of time, flesh, dust, and pleasure's hasty day,
Reiterating, weary line on line,
Death's threadbare homily. "O Nature mine,"
I cried in wrath, "thou who didst breathe last May
The spirit of gladness in young lambs at play,
Show thyself potent yet, by one sure sign."

Then the moon rose. I saw her full and calm,
Move through the large clouds, as a mother might
From room to room where sleeping children lie:
"My son," she said to me, "since yesternight
I made my blissful round through Italy,
From far Cathay, and silvered isles of palm."

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY.

“Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”—ROM. viii. 23.

THIS eighth chapter of Romans is one of the most sublime passages in the Bible. The struggle of thought is too powerful for the language to express. It bears every mark of being the utterance of a great soul, in a great spiritual crisis. As we read its heroic strain, we have the satisfaction of knowing that it was no theory or ideal merely, but the living creed of a man who was at that moment exposed to all manner of trial and persecution, and who not long after sacrificed his life to his faith. It has to an eminent degree this secret of the Bible's power, that it is the living faith of a living man. The writer has not said, “Let us now express a beautiful moral idea.” He says: “See, my brothers, I have struggled, I have conquered; and this was the faith that made me strong, and which I shall trust in till I die.”

Let us try to discover the apostle's meaning in this chapter, and then in the text. He has been speaking of the spirit and the flesh, of man's spirit and man's flesh as contrasted, as antagonistic, the one being

the life of life, the other bearing in it a law of death. Whatever is only of the flesh shall fail: what is of the spirit is full of joy and eternity. The life of the spirit is a divine life, and they who share it are called the sons of God.

But this scene of conflict in man's own being, of life with death, of the perishable with the eternal, of the earthly and the divine, carries his thought forward to a wider range. This contrast between flesh and spirit is contemplated as the law of the whole universe. There is a material and a spiritual creation. The apostle sees man and man's nature as the crowning wonder of the whole creation. In him begins a new and higher order of being. The old creation was in the "bondage of corruption": it was "made subject to vanity"; *i.e.*, it consisted of perishable things. But this perishable creation is always groaning and aspiring for something higher. All the things of time are prophetic and partial. The new creation in Christ fulfils the hope of all Nature, and is the "divine event" to which the whole creation has hitherto been moving.

And every man to whom Paul speaks, even Paul himself, belongs to both these orders of being,—to the old order which is carnal and perishable, to the new which is spiritual and eternal.

The spiritual creation is yet unfinished. We have only the "first-fruits" of it. As all Nature for so many ages has been "groaning and travailing," even so "we ourselves groan within ourselves." Our spiritual life (and this he says of men who have touched

the living hands of Christ) is only beginning. "We are saved by hope." We stand only on the threshold of the temple of God. Yet this life of the spirit has the victory already. "All things work together" for its good. It will go on forever. It is the will of God, it is the love of God; and neither by "height nor depth," nor by any future creation, shall we be separated from it.

With this outline of his thought before us, we shall see more clearly what each expression in this wonderful chapter means. The first principle is, that in the spiritual man a life begins which may be regarded as a new order of creation. The creature of God becomes the child of God. Bondage has become liberty. What was dead now lives.

Our wider knowledge of the universe illustrates and confirms the apostle's thought. It is easy to see that with Man a new principle enters the world. Between the animal and the human there is an uncrossed gulf, like that between a crystal and a plant. There are elements common to both, but the higher form is really a new creation. The principle of evolution affirms that there is a passage across the gulf. But the bridge has long been lost.

Nature divides species from species as clearly as star from star. Whatever the origin and process may be, the final result is separated orders of life. Here and there are species close of kin, but the consenting testimony is that nature is divided by great planes into lower and higher. From lifeless to living, from animal to human, from human to spiritual,—these

mighty gradations, though parts of one providential scheme, are none the less so sharply distinct that they may well be termed so many separated creations of God.

This general view of the world corresponds to all intents and purposes with the apostle's. He has not seen the view in detail. But it is his ruling thought that a new manhood, a new and spiritual creation, is brought into the world by Jesus and the "spirit of life" in him. The physiologist, whose classification concerns only the visible man, may be unwilling to admit any new species of humanity. But, surely, our apostle, who is speaking of human nature only from a moral and religious point of view, uses no extravagant language when he affirms that the manhood of the Christian order is a new creation. He distinguishes them as natural and spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the merely human and the human quickened by the spirit of God. He is continually comparing them. The "old man" is ruled by fear, the "new man" by love. The old man is dark, violent, and centred upon self: the new is full of light and peace, and lives unto himself no more. The natural humanity lives by the senses only: our spiritual humanity sees the things which are unseen and eternal. Here is a transformation as radical as the change from instinct to reason, or from appetite to conscience. It is a new man in a new world.

The next great principle in this chapter, is that the natural and spiritual belong to the same divine order. The "whole creation groans and travails *together*,

waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." Nature is Man's friend. The lower orders of creation are made to prepare the way for the higher orders. Great as is the antagonism between Nature and Spirit, they are in reality allies. What precedes the highest development of humanity is not evil, but imperfect; not under the divine curse, but working toward a divinely ordered result.

Does not our exactest science confirm this prophetic insight? The planet's surface has been for countless ages preparing for its present use. Very slowly the rocky globe was clothed with life, its mephitic atmosphere cleansed, its swampy plains drained dry, till some habitation was ready for human life. Then the rude beginnings of man strive forward to the spiritual creation. Earth and river, mountain and sea, have been the instructors and upbuilders of the human soul. Nature's violence makes Man brave. Her sternness and frugality make him a worker and a thinker. Even want and famine, enforced by frugal Nature upon her pensioners, have driven Man outward from the isolation of the family or tribe into some large, national brotherhood, where he learns the impotence of self-dependence, and glows with heroism, self-sacrifice, and generous joy.

Man's whole nature, even that part of it which we derive from the brute, has ever pointed upward to the spirit. The very violence of his passions will urge him on to government and spirituality. All his appetites are constructive: only, like all elemental forces, they must be rightly guided and applied.

Just as the heads of fossil beast or bird are rude fore-runners of a human countenance, so the primeval instincts of humanity are prophetic of the highest life which shall befall the human soul.

Now, when Paul has set forth what this life of the spiritual man is, and how it is the crowning of the world's history, a new question—I may say a mis-giving—arises in him. The question is this, When is redemption finished? It is no speculative question, but one springing from the depths of the apostle's heart and life. Surely, if any man ever gave himself utterly to a heavenly vision, Paul had done so. He had left all, and followed Christ. Outwardly, he had thrown himself into the work of his apostleship; and, inwardly, he was filled with divine zeal and charity, which he calls variously "the Spirit," or "the spirit of life in Christ," or the "grace" of God. What that inner life was we may faintly imagine when we remember that these mighty epistles are but glowing incidents, mere overflowing fires from that burning soul.

Yet Paul has made that solemn confession,—the saintly lamentation, which ever since has given courage to so many struggling souls, though feebler and less pure than his: "I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." Then, looking away from himself, he sees the Church—the Roman and the Corinthian Churches—so full of sin. He sees so many Chris-

tians, undoubtedly sincere, undoubtedly belonging to the new kingdom of Christ, yet, alas! so full of strife, envying, folly, and weakness. What wonder, then, that the question rises: When is the spiritual creation perfected? When is our redemption accomplished? To this he gives only one answer, and that a plain one. That all growth is slow. The law of slow growth (which we saw moving up through the lower creation, till the creature "of the earth, earthy," becomes the "son of God") prevails also in the spiritual creation. We have only the first-fruits of the Spirit. We are saved by hope. We know only in part. We pass from glory to glory, from faith to faith; and, therefore, we are still in the attitude of patient waiting.

This idea of slow and difficult spiritual progress is never absent from a living Christianity. It is expressed with peculiar clearness and force in the text. "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption,"—that was a modest word, was it not?—for those who in the name of Christ had worked miracles, dared and suffered all things, and whom half the Church worships as supernaturally sanctified. "Waiting for the redemption of the body"! See now what this implies.

Translating Paul's thought into our own words, it means that to his higher life his body is an obstacle. All the habits of an evil past are still continued there, while his spiritual nature has freed itself. A body is partly an automaton. After it is set moving a certain way, it goes on that way. Every action of

the human will tends to become a habit. The body and brain of man are bundles of habits. The mind and soul originate action and progress. But the body is conservative. We see this most clearly in the case of sinful appetites. We know that the reformed drunkard must still pray God for strength against his besetting sin. The conservatism of the body is just as real in the case of more refined and delicate sins. The brain-cells that have been made the instruments of pride, selfishness, and evil-speaking, tend to repeat such thoughts over and over. Mental habits and habits of feeling are all associated with the action of nerve and brain. Therefore, the thoroughly repentant, the truly Christian soul, may find itself plagued with such old thoughts and feelings as it would no longer willingly harbor. It is the body which does this. It is the poor, faithful body, which, like a dumb beast, is just going on with the tricks that have been taught it.

When the apostle says, we hope for the redemption of the body from such slavery, he simply means that the spiritual life will finally make the natural life its ally. The members that were "servants to sin" will become, as willingly, "the servants of righteousness." In the body itself is nothing either good or evil. It is the obedient instrument of the soul; and, therefore, the spiritual man may redeem his body and brain to the uses of the spirit. What was all natural becomes all spiritual. What was lawless is set in order. The violent become strong. Weakness becomes obedience, and what was mere unrest, becomes action and overflowing life.

While yet we have only the first-fruits of the Spirit, all this has not come to pass. The earliest work of the Holy Spirit is in the inner places of the soul. The candle is under a bushel. The kingdom has not come, nor the word been made flesh. When the heart returns to God, when love and faith have possessed the inner man, there is still somewhat to wait for. The stronghold of selfishness may be destroyed, but the old enemy still lives in the outer places of his strength. For it is the Christian idea that progress is from within outward. We do not begin spiritual progress by a reformation of the habits, but by an inward change of spiritual direction, a change of desire, a holier love, a deeper faith in God; and, then, the water of life goes abroad like a stream from the hills to make the valleys green. The changed conduct is the after-effect of a changed heart and life. Who that knows human nature, who that has known himself, can doubt that this is the true course of spiritual growth? Everything human begins within the soul.

But, because there is a "redemption of the body," these first effects of spiritual life, which are within, are ever moving on to possess the outward man as well. The life of the spirit is not a going out of the body, but a spiritualizing of the body. The Christian does not withdraw himself from the world: he overcomes the world. The spiritual does not destroy the natural: it harmonizes and transfigures it.

Many people think of "spirituality" as something sickly and pale. No doubt it is a wholesome re-

action against the old, sickly view of religion that so many people at the present day are boldly preaching that Christian faith is a kind of medicine, and sickness a form of sin. True faith *is* a principle of life. It is living water, it is manna and wine, and is requisite and necessary as well for the body as for the soul. Think what life would be, were there no longer any obstacle in the flesh, but only a helper of the higher life! And it will be so. Even the unspiritual man knows how his physical frame responds to the impulse of the soul. When his pride is insulted, he is faint with mortification, or hot with rage. When terror seizes him, his face blanches, and he feels his heart sink. When about to grasp some longed for good, he feels his blood come and go in his pulses. Much more, when his body is the servant of righteousness, will it thrill with and emphasize every movement of goodness. Courage will give him tranquil nerves, and put energy into his perceptions. Sympathy makes him feel another's pain as if his own. He will shrink as instinctively from moral baseness, as now from contagion or stain.

It is a distinct gain in religion to call health holy. The gospel story shows very plainly that faith, hope, love, and joy in a man's soul are directly curative of bodily disease. The Christian Church has always believed so, and it is a good thing to reaffirm this line of truth. But people who with a frivolous habit of wonder, put the emphasis on miracles of healing, either ancient or modern, are apt to miss a graver truth, the greater marvel, which underlies the Christian

teaching as to the redemption of the flesh by the spirit.

The redemption of the body, as Saint Paul means it, is accomplished when it becomes the willing "servant of righteousness."

How often, when high thoughts and purposes are present with us, our feelings are dull and cold, and our will sternly drives a lagging pulse to a deed we ought to spring to with joy! It is because our physical powers are not a match for the spiritual. The body is not redeemed. But we have hints even now of that victorious condition when the spirit of man shall master its domain. Then the brain will glow for truth, and the heart for love; the hand will spring to the act of justice or mercy as passionately as it now obeys the motions of hunger and thirst. Then courage will know no shrinking, and purity no temptation, and justice no delay. The inner life of aspiration will find free course and expression, because the whole man, the physical and spiritual, will be full of the spirit of God. So sings one of Browning's sages:—

"Let us not always say,
'*Spite* of this flesh, to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground, upon the whole!'
As the bird sings and wings,
Let us cry, 'All good things
Are ours; nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh
helps soul!'"

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

See, then, how this hope of the apostle's grounded so deeply in his vast thought of God's method of cre-

ation, brings us back to the clearest facts of our moral experience. Our every act and thought leaves written in our very flesh its permanent memorial. God needs no recording angel with book of fate to chronicle our lives. They are registered by a far more unerring plan in the very dust of which we are made. Every sinful choice, though consummated in some flashing instant of time, has left its mark in some tendency, some weakness, which is stereotyped in our brains, though by the grace of God it may remain only as a warning to keep us from a second fall.

When we realize in thought this sensitiveness, this transparency of flesh to spirit, is it not pitiful that Christians have dared despise the life of the body, as if it had no part in the work of God? Let us return to the larger, deeper thought of redemption, which is not just saving a man's soul, but bringing his whole nature into a divine order of life. If, then, we "groan within ourselves," because our nature is divided, because conflict is the law of our being, let us ask ourselves this question, What would life be worth if it were otherwise? Would you like to grow into righteousness as the rose to beauty, and have no part in your own creation? I know you would not. You would rather join with God in his greatest work,—the fashioning of a soul. Is anything on earth more interesting, more wonderful, than to see the successive conquests of the spirit of Christ in a redeemed man? to see the transfiguration of every power, till there is nothing in his life, which his highest purpose and faith fail to touch?

And out of redeemed men God is making a redeemed world,—a world in which there shall be no more curse, a world which is growing better every day.

Have you and I this hope in us? Are we expecting the larger redemption? Is our religion only a sentiment? Is our higher life of spiritual aspiration a mere vision for a holy hour, or is it a force in our lives, spreading, and deepening in our natures, till it shall possess us altogether? What a hope this is! What a joy and glory is this vision of the apostle that nothing is common or unclean! that, (as in Peter's vision of the many beasts let down from heaven and received up again,) the life descending from above has power to draw upward again all earthly elements, all base, brutish things, and so to redeem and glorify all!

Then will our true humanity be fulfilled, when the divided creation of God is joined together. The spiritual and the natural will be one, and the body will have its rightful use as the servant and revealer of the soul. God has made two worlds,—a material and a spiritual. They revolve in separate orbits with perpetual jar, perturbations, and eclipse; but in the end their orbits become the same, and they move around the Sun of Righteousness, singing the same celestial song to the glory of God. Let us all be sure that every faithful day, every self-conquest, every deed of loving service, will not only bring order to our souls, but will bring our whole being—body, mind, and spirit—into the harmony of the divine creation.

SAINT PETER, MARTYR.

[A monk with finger on his lips. A picture hung over a clock.]

“**A**BOVE the noises of thy life’s brief day
Eternal silence watches. Oh, make haste!
Wherefore these idle words? Why wilt thou waste
Thy soul’s pure force on things that pass away?
Tame thy false heart, and bid its sensual clay
Long draughts of mortal man’s keen anguish taste;
Think on thy sins, thy death, and self-abased,
Serve God the silent, uncomplaining way.”

So speaks the cowl. God’s true church hears the voice,
And half approves; then to earth’s fruitful fields,
Singing and smiling, turns with dauntless cheer;
In all brief gleams of gladness doth rejoice;
Covers her graves with lilies, while she yields
Due praise to Heaven, and cries, “Our God is here.”

GREAT THINGS FOR SMALL.

“Give, and it shall be given to you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.”—
LUKE vi. 38.

THE subject here suggested is one which does not lie very clearly in my own thought, and yet I am certain that no subject is more important. I may call it the law of action and reaction which runs through all our life. If you push against the wall, the wall pushes back at you with exactly the same force. There it is on the plane of mere brute force. But, the higher you rise in the scale, the more the reaction is greater than the action, the more what is given you is greater than what you give. Remember, that in every sort of work a man's hands can find to do, the essential half of what he does is done not by himself, but by the elements he works in ; that is, part of the work is man's, part nature's. Think this out concerning the simplest needs and labors of the human race. Look at the farmer, how he ploughs his broad, brown acres ; but, to do this, he must have a soil that yields to the ploughshare and a plough that cuts the furrow deep. He cannot plough in granite, nor with a plough of straw. The ploughman's toil is only

possible when beneath the strong and cunning hand, as fellow-laborers with it, are the loamy earth and good iron blade. Look at the weaver at his loom. How wonderful his craft is! How swift the shuttles fly, how smooth and even-lined the fair web rolls forth beneath his hand! And yet, whatever the machine employed, whether the distaff of Penelope, or the power-loom of our own century that has revolutionized a civilization, the conditions of the weaver's art are the same. His cunning hand, his dexterous shuttles and wheels, can only weave in substance that is weavable,—cannot operate on wax or cobwebs, can find no fibres in marble,—can spin the white plumes of the cotton-seed, but braid no robe of the shining thistle-down, not even for an emperor's array.

We might analyze in the same manner any species of human toil, and always with the same result. What man can do is only what Nature lets him do. He can only watch her tides, and launch his bark accordingly. Music gives us still clearer illustration. Man can only make the music which his soul desires, which his soul creates, upon Nature's resounding strings,—her singing brass, her vibrant wood, her melodious shell, from which by a hundred patient arts is shaped the orchestra.

Or to use another musical emblem—think of a little child, who stands, let us say, under some monster bell, such as stand by temple gates or are lifted cloudward in cathedral spires. So long as the child is still, the great bell is silent. But the little hands take hold, and soon the ponderous mass, that seemed

so immovable, so lifeless, will swing resistless to and fro, and solemnly toll or wildly throb from its iron heart with peal on peal, and fill a whole city with terror or surprise. What a far-sounding peal, what a mighty commotion, the little restless child has made! Such is man in his relation to this sounding dome of Nature which hangs over him. The music which it utters is mighty, beyond all proportion to the light touch that stirs it. With all his science and all his so-called mastery of new forces, all his experience and art, his bold trial of new combinations and unprecedented strokes, what is man's learning—but how to strike the great temple-bell of time, and more and more to make it ring with music of soul-searching tone, that speaks to a listening humanity, of mysteries of faith and love, and calls our thoughts upward to eternal things?

Let us now keep clearly in our minds this conception of the life we live. Our life is ours: therefore, we must act, we must achieve, we must strive and strike and strain; and yet our lives are given us, and therefore we must do something more than bestir ourselves, something more than toil and reach up. We must watch and listen, must wait, ponder, and receive. Our eager prayer must bow in wise submission: our strong endeavor must learn what power can only come of a quiet heart and the strength of standing still. We must both ask and receive. We must act,—act boldly and earnestly; and yet we must know in our hearts that whatever we would achieve or win must come to us by laws we did not make, will be rolled up

at our feet on tides of power not our own, and will have results far transcending our knowledge and capacity.

Of all lessons science has emphasized for religion, none is more impressive than this of the responsiveness of the universe to man, and of the vastness of the response as compared with our littleness. How feeble is man, how immeasurable the forces he may take into partnership! How dim and imperfect the human eye!—a poor, watery, purblind, slow-paced thing, so science proves; and yet, with a few good glasses, it explores the galaxy, or catches the microbe in the act. So dull this human ear that the greater part of our field of vision is silent as a picture; and yet it may be we shall one day hear clear round the world, when telephonic prophecy is fulfilled and the adjustments are complete.

Such, then, being our position in the universe, such being the laws under which we live,—a law of action and reaction, (not, as in the mechanical order, equal,) but a law that action is small and the reaction vast, the investment inconsiderable, and the returns boundless,—how does this truth affect our feelings, conduct, hope, and faith?

First of all, it invests every human life and all human action with immense importance, so vast is the initiative which God has given to a human will. Think of it! Expose to a life of disease, ignorance, or crime yonder snub-nosed workhouse boy,—God forgive us!—there may be a Henry M. Stanley in him, a James Watt, an Edison, a Martin Luther; there may

be something there, when you have lifted him from his pauper's heritage, that can change continents, civilizations, religions! Or did I permit myself a conscious act of injustice, did I knowingly sin against my true manhood? Who knows how vast and mischievous the unseen, incalculable effects? Fool, firebrand, I may have cast a spark into a powder-mill; I may have started a moral contagion which a thousand righteous men cannot suppress. That one wrong act of mine may plant a whole harvest of tares; that one base lie of mine go echoing on and on so far that I can never call it back.

Such, doubtless, is the nature of those sins of which the Scripture says that saddest of all words, "They found no place for repentance, though they sought it bitterly and with tears." There are evil deeds whose consequences are so far-reaching and disastrous that the wrong-doer can never overtake them, never know them all, never undo what he has done. For those who have such things to be sorry for, there is but one consolation, one hope: that, since God in his wisdom suffers such things to be, we may believe that to these spreading results there is some God-appointed limit; and that their very awfulness and extent, if it fill our own hearts with a hatred of evil and the fear of committing it, may finally turn many to righteousness; and so the very destructiveness of wickedness may incline the world the other way,—just as the horrors of war are the strongest motive to persuade the nations to peace.

But, if such be the law of retribution in things evil,

how much more wonderful and wide-reaching is the response given by the laws of life to the righteous soul! This is the joyful assurance that stirred the heart of prophet and psalmist of Israel to sing praise to the God of his righteousness, and to promise to all obedient hearers the rewards of life, honor, blessing, and power.

For the spread and enlargement of what is good is in its very nature different from the spread of evil which I have described. The spread of evil is as of a conflagration or pestilence. It burns itself out, and finally can spread no more. But such is the constitution of man and of the universe, that every good,—that is, every victory for order, life, and love—becomes a point of departure for endless evolution of things higher and fairer. The victory of evil is for a time, the victories of good eternal. This is the truth that makes the note of joy in the Bible. If we also, with opened spiritual eye, could see how every good action is as a seed in very fruitful ground, how every step toward goodness leads us on to more power and freedom, to more inspiring service, and more even gladness, we should move on, not as now, with languid acquiescence, but with eager hearts, with passionate devotion, and take our places in the world, like the sons of God at its first creation, “shouting for joy.” We should run and not be weary, we should walk and not faint.

This is something, then, which we must ever take account of when we are feeble and faint-hearted for the right. When you pause upon the way of duty, when

you doubt and tremble at the call which conscience gives, remember that *every good action touches springs of power which you know not of*. You are dealing not alone with the poor, wavering elements of your own will; but, when you choose what is right and conquer what is evil, invisible powers, more than legions of angels, are thereby summoned to your help.

It is at this point that morality becomes religion. Morality does not become religion when it is, as Matthew Arnold says, "touched with emotion," but when it is touched with faith in the living God.

Let us consider some of the applications of this truth to the concerns of the spiritual life. For this fundamental truth that "God is for the right," that, "if ye ask, ye shall receive," while you may accept it as a pious statement, will not help you until you apply and particularize it.

Remember, then, when you enter upon any course of action which you know to be your duty, that strength will come to you in ways you do not now foresee. Do not say: "I fear my good intentions will not last." "I am afraid my good impulses will cool, and my righteous enthusiasm pass away."

Don't spend much force preparing yourself, and working yourself up, to what you think a fitting mood for doing right. Is it an act of courage that is required of you? Then make yourself brave by following the trumpet to the battle's front.

There is a familiar story of a high-spirited but inexperienced young officer who noticed, just before a general engagement, a veteran soldier at his side look-

ing so anxious and pale, that he ventured to rally him on the subject. "Young man," replied the other, "if you dreaded this battle as I do, you would run away now." The old man's rebuke meant that true courage in such a situation is not a mood, but a resolution, not a swelling pulse, but an immovable will. Who can doubt which courage is the higher? that a brave action is nobler than any fine glow of feeling whatever?

Is it an errand of mercy or some word of forgiveness for which your conscience calls? Don't spend much time waiting for the happy moment when you feel particularly kind-hearted and forgiving. Warm your heart by doing good. Get the spirit of forgiveness by looking him who has wronged you in the face.

Perhaps that unforgiving brother whom Christ bade leave on the altar the gift, and go first to be reconciled,—perhaps he had come to the temple door thinking to soothe his soul with higher thoughts, and so be able to do the duty from which he shrank. But Jesus sends him immediately away from the altar, back to his brother.

Dear friends, if any one of you to-day is wavering upon the edge of a duty, if you have even come here to this place of prayer in the hope of finding here the mood and feeling that should impel you to what you shrink from, I assure you most solemnly that the full strength to do your duty will only come as you do it. The love you need will possess your heart only when you are moving where it calls you to act or to speak. "The preparations of the heart are with the Lord."

Go in faith, go nothing fearing, and you will wonder to find how easy it will be.

But, while we must always trust to the unforeseen aid and strength, which God gives to his children when they are walking where he calls them, yet it is helpful, when it is possible, to foresee the very channels through which the gifts of God will flow. Always we can see something; and, in general, we can see much. You know, when your conscience is satisfied, when you are doing what you believe to be right, that, in itself, is a great source of power and peace, such as you cannot have while you are delaying and apologizing concerning the central duty of your life. The sense of duty done, whatever the sacrifice, should ever make a quiet mind; and it clears the sight to see what the next step may be, as you cannot see until the first step is taken.

Then, after this strength that God gives you in the very act of obedience, there will be the strength, the inspiration, that will come to you from the natural effect of your act, of your word, or your sacrifice, upon those whom it concerns. By forgiving your enemy, you make him your friend, or, by that deed or word of love, win a friendship of which before you were not worthy. If you have given up what seemed your heart's desire, in order that some greater good may come, then in that greater good you may lose the first desire altogether; or, by the very sacrifice, may make the lesser good become possible and become nobler, just because you have waited and suffered for it. Be sure that you can never act from your highest motives

without a response somewhere. "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." Even what we call the mistakes of life,—I mean those good actions which do not produce the result we expected,—if they were brought forth, as the Gospel says, "from the treasure of a good heart," have results unexpected, and "verily they have their reward."

If you will not take into your daily thought of life something of the expectant mind, the listening ear, the receiving heart, you miss half the meaning of existence; for you miss the great response of the universe to your life. Whatever side of life you are strongest and richest in, be sure it is because you are open there to the incoming of this response.

Who is the wise man? Who has the intellectual life most abounding and profitable? Always he who has the widest sensitiveness to truth from many messengers. Let a man so narrow his interests that only one kind of truth attracts him; let him bury himself in his laboratory and forget Nature; or in his books, with no outlook on the great daily current of human affairs, and he becomes a pedant, a specialist, not a full-statured, truth-loving man. To the man with an intellect of the first quality, everything is grist that comes to his mill. He is omnivorous. He is in the world as one who swims in a great sea of light, and takes in the light at every pore. Such a man has indeed his special field and special problem; but he gets light on his problem from most unexpected quarters, and finds oftentimes the very solution of his

question in something far from his own specialty, which flashes in upon him the light, which the narrow, plodding pedant could not see.

In the same way, who has not seen how every large moral nature has a similar widely-looking trust in men and things? The truly saintly and heroic souls are not they whose affections live in cloistered seclusion, in some little garden-plot of home, all careless of the passers-by, or in some narrow neighborhood of sect, party, or creed, forgetful of the great humanity around them.

How often, indeed, do we see men whose natural love of home and kindred or whose natural loyalty to sect or party has degenerated into a more refined and more avaricious selfishness! Yet how evidently it is the will of God that these private affections, these special loyalties, should not be barriers to exclude us from the love of God and of all men, but that out of these most deep and personal experiences we should get the very sensitiveness and power of loving, that makes the larger life possible! Do you love your own fireside, your own people, better than anything else on earth? That is right, as it is natural. But remember that out of happy homes like yours, the health and power of your country must grow. Remember the numberless homes where there are like joys, and cares, and depths of tender love, as in your own, and then understand how rich and precious is this human life of ours. So it is with the man whose loyalty to his party, to his college, to his church, is because he sees in each of these the instrument by which, under God,

he can serve something larger. His party is only his choice that he may so help his country. His college is only that which stands nearest him of the great world of intellect and human knowledge, and by the narrower association he is simply fitted for entering into fellowship all over the world with men to whom the things of the intellect are precious.

As for the church, alas! that this great conception of all men as children of God, and of the church as standing for that divine truth among mankind, should ever have suffered men to make their churchmanship another name for partisan bigotry. That is sad enough. But the man who loves his church, just because it represents to him the catholic brotherhood of all men before God, be sure he loves the church even as Christ loved it. For the narrow churchman, indeed, his church-life can only sink him deeper in artificiality; only keep him further away from the great throbbing life of humanity; and give him a poor, petty, unmanly standard of conduct, which has no beauty of holiness that men should desire it, but only a non-natural affectation that sincere people are glad to let alone. But the churchman whose church is made for man, and who makes his church life the centre of divine affections that flow out to all sorts and conditions of men,—what a magnificent response the world makes to that man's faith and life! Such churchmen and such a church will find a whole world ready to listen, find allies and apostles where least looked for.

People are discussing to-day about the authority of

religion and authority of the church. The truth is the church of Christ does not anywhere in the world trust itself to the inherent power of its faith to inspire, and to the greatness of its mission of love. It quenches its spirit with creeds and ceremonials. It props itself with worldly power. It appears, not arrayed like Christ as the servant of all, but in borrowed plumes of rank, money, and intellectual subtleties. If once the church could speak again the simple glad tidings of Christ to a weary world, if once the church could wholly and unreservedly be doing Christ's work and showing his life among men, she would have London and New York at her feet. When I say the church, I mean "all Christians." Christians have not yet begun to believe in the immense gifts of God, or in the glorious responses which would come, did we live as we profess and pray. Who can doubt that, if all the so-called Christian men and women in this great land of ours could rise up together against any one, even of the worst and foulest, of the evils that infest our time, they could hurl it into the abyss within a single year? It is not that our faith lacks authority: it is that we have so little of it. It is not that the church is useless and superannuated: it is that we are not truly a church, not truly bound together by the spirit of the living God to be of one heart and mind in serving the whole family of God on earth.

Yes, friends, we are all of us living in a world we have not used. We are millionaires, and we live like misers. We are children of God, and yet we make the dust our portion and fearfulness our heritage.

There is one way, and one only, by which the old prayer can be answered,—“Lord, increase our faith.” Our faith will grow only as we live by it. Only as we trust ourselves to our highest inspirations can we have the blessings they would bring.

ALLELUIA.*

GLORY be to God on high!
Alleluia!

Let the whole creation cry,
Alleluia!

Peace and blessing he has given,
Alleluia!

Earth repeat the songs of heaven!
Alleluia!

Creatures of the field and flood,
Alleluia!

Earth and sea cry, "God is good."
Alleluia!

Toiling pilgrims raise the song,
Alleluia!

Saints in light the strain prolong,
Alleluia!

Stars that have no voice to sing,
Alleluia!

Give their glory to our King.
Alleluia!

Silent powers and angel's song,
Alleluia!

All unto our God belong.
Alleluia!

* Written to music, Hymnal "Amore Dei," No. 19.

CHARACTER-BUILDING.

“Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore get wisdom.”—PROV. iv. 7.

THE wisdom here meant is the wisdom of life. The word means righteousness, or, as we say now, character. Character, then, is the principal thing.

One of the first questions which the human soul asks of life is, “What are we put into this world *for*?” “Has our existence a purpose?” Now the Bible answers this question by teaching us that the purpose of life is the formation of character. This is its plain answer to this question of questions. The Bible, indeed, is not the only source of such teaching; for it is heard from the wisest men in every land and every age. But where, outside of the Bible, is this truth taught with such single-mindedness, such energy, such persistency, or with such sublime illustration and appealing pathos?

At different times, however, men have deliberately set before themselves other objects in place of this supreme purpose of life, just as you and I, whether ignorantly or wilfully, have often done. But none of these other objects meet the simple tests that alone could prove them the “principal thing”; that is, the true and controlling purpose of a human life. For such a supreme object must evidently be such as can be pursued by all men, under all circumstances; and

it must be an object to which all other purposes and occupations of life can be made to contribute. Let us consider some of the common aims and objects for which men live, or think they live, and see how they meet these three tests. Let us see if they can be universal for all men under all circumstances, and supreme over all other aims.

How often have we set before ourselves as the ruling purpose the achievement of our personal happiness! Enjoyment, happiness! Can this be our destined end and aim? How evidently it fails to meet the tests!

There are many situations in life when enjoyment becomes impossible. There are great realities and processes which are essentially a part of life, such as birth and death, labor, weariness, sickness, struggle, disappointment. All of these must be endured as belonging to our mortal portion; and, though they have much to do with *character*, they have nothing to do with enjoyment.

But, even if some individuals seem to our dim, human vision to make enjoyment a life purpose, and to succeed in so doing, yet it is evident that all men cannot so succeed. There always have been, and there always must be, large numbers of men to whom, from the standpoint of personal happiness, life is a failure.

Moreover, even those who believe enjoyment to be the aim of human existence, soon find out that this purpose is not one to which other life purposes can be made to contribute. As men grow richer and more powerful,—and most men regard wealth and power as

things to be desired,—they also add to their burdens of care and trouble, and lose their lightness of heart. In like manner we have the world's old experience that to grow wise is often to grow sad, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

But perhaps if happiness be not “the principal thing,” we may find it in just this wider knowledge, the desire of which is so deep in all sound and noble natures. Knowledge may not be the same thing as happiness, it may not always be power; but, surely, it is a noble and worthy object to which to devote one's existence. All honor to the men who make it so, who

“Scorn delights and live laborious days,”

sustained only by the love of truth! Yet, evidently, this noble passion for knowledge cannot meet the tests which would entitle it to be called the “principal thing.” It cannot be pursued by all mankind. To acquire much knowledge, to have the highest intellectual activity, requires an amount of leisure and of ability possessed only by few. Nor can it be pursued by any man at all times. The brain wearies. The light grows dim. Storms of passion or pain cloud the starry objects of his study, and the scholar is left in darkness to feel the littleness of a mortal mind, to hear the voice which whispers to his intellectual ambition,

“What shadows we are! What shadows we pursue!”

If, then, happiness and knowledge, purposes legitimately having part in every life, can neither of

them take the supreme and central place, how much more clearly is this the case with the many purposes, absorbing so much of people's thought, of which the very essence is, that while one succeeds another fails! Ambition, in the sense of a desire to outshine or dominate one's fellow-creatures; the pursuit of wealth, which can be successful only for the few; the desire to be in the fashion; to have a great social position or splendid renown,—no such purpose as these can be the God-appointed aim of human life. For such a God-appointed aim must be one which is set before each man simply because he is human,—an aim in which no man's loss can be another's gain, but in which the gain of each is the gain of all.

Contrast, then, with all these inferior or evil purposes, that "principal thing," which is the *formation of character*. To all men, in all conditions of life, this divine purpose of our existence can make all other purposes subordinate. Is a man's life happy? Let him use his happiness nobly, with a thankful heart toward God, and a spirit of love and helpfulness toward his brothers. Or is his life unhappy? Let him be brave, patient, and unselfish. Let his hidden sorrow or pain open his heart to all the pathos and pity of human life, and so teach him the deep things of the soul, that just because he has been "acquainted with grief" he becomes the friend and helper of many. Has he an active intellect, with great opportunities for getting knowledge? or is he dull and uncultivated? In either case he has duties which are higher than any mental life; and God will not require

of him the sciences he has mastered, but whether he has loved mercy and honor, whether, with a pure heart, truthful lips, and earnest toil, he has been "faithful to the end."

Character, then, is the "principal thing."

What, then, are the methods by which we are to pursue this object? Since all other arts have rules which experience has proved, are there rules to guide us in this supreme art of life,—the art of character-making?

There are, it may be observed, some general truths to be accepted before we are likely to go about the work of forming character with any seriousness whatever. The first is the one already laid down, that this is the principal business of life. This conviction of the importance of the work can alone make you earnest about it. The second is the truth that your character is all the time forming, whether you will or not; and that, if you do not attend to the matter, your character will grow wrongly instead of rightly. This truth we must realize, in order to be faithful and persistent in the work. Thirdly, that this work is never done; that your character goes on developing through life, and every experience which life brings is some new opportunity. We are never to suppose that we have attained the goal.

But, besides these truths which we must act upon, there are also rules which we must follow in this life-work and purpose. Let us consider those which are most insisted on in the Bible. The first rule is the rule of *inwardness*: "Keep thy heart with all dili-

gence." "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This exhortation to greater inwardness is indeed supremely characteristic of Christianity. But it is also found elsewhere. "I affirm," said a wise pagan, "that virtue is no other than a good ordering of the mind." The righteous man, as described in the first Psalm, is one who meditates upon the law of the Lord, and who takes his delight in so doing. By this rule of inwardness any genuine progress in goodness must always be made. Yet how few of us guard our thoughts as carefully as our actions! How seldom do we realize this when we reproach ourselves for things done or not done, that both our sins of commission and sins of neglect all spring from some wrong state of mind in which we are, from some hardness of heart, some low, false thought about life, some coldness or baseness or malice which took shape in action as naturally as an infant's cries express his unrest within! The formation of character, then, is, first of all, not an ordering of our habits, but an ordering of our minds; not an adoption of this or that resolve, but a laying hold of inner principles of life and conduct. To think high thoughts, to set our affections on worthy objects, to cherish unselfish, generous feelings,—these are our most important duties.

Have you some particular fault you desire to overcome? Is there some virtue you long to possess? Consider, first of all, what are the thoughts and feelings which are most opposed to such a fault or most favorable to such a virtue. The advantage of this method, of working from within outward, is most

evident, in that the field for self-conquest within you is ever present, whereas the outward action can only occur once in a while. Therefore, all continuous moral effort must be in this inner field. Whatever your besetting sin may be, the occasions or temptations are comparatively few and far between. If you resist temptation only when it arrives, there will be no moral force at your command equal to the emergency. Your temptations must be anticipated, must be conquered in imagination, before they are put to flight in reality, as Von Moltke won his battles on the map before he saw the enemy's country.

What we need for the victory over any form of sin is a certain moral momentum to carry us over the place of danger.

The same thing is true of any form of virtue. Is there some grace or virtue you wish to attain? Then do not wait till you have an opportunity to practise it. Anticipate your good acts by desiring and imagining them, by living in their atmosphere. Do you wish for the great virtue of kind and sympathetic speech, the power of saying the right thing at the right time? The only way to get it is to live so much in sympathy with others that, when the need of sympathy comes, you can give it readily and naturally. Do you want the virtue of industry, of greater faithfulness to your daily duties? This is a virtue which you cannot acquire if you think of it only in working hours. The best impulses to more faithful work are those which come to you in hours of ease. As it is from the hour of silent thought your best speech comes, so

it is often from the idle hour that the higher insight comes that sends you back to your task with new energy and hope.

“—— tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.”

The man who does the best work in the world is he who loves his work and who believes in it. This love of your task, this faith in it, this large thought of it, by which alone you can accomplish it satisfactorily, must come to you not only while your hand is actually at the wheel, but from your turning your thoughts and interests at all times in the direction of your duty. A man accustomed to accomplish large things once told me that the most important season in his day was perhaps a half-hour of clear waking thought just before he rose from his bed in the morning. In those quiet moments of solitude and freedom his whole day took shape in his mind and heart. In the strength of that interior preparation he carried through in thought the undertakings that lay before him. This inner activity is essential to success in every department of life, but nowhere more so than in our business of forming character. If the general wins his battle and the artist gets his vision in the quiet hour of preparation when his task is far away, much more in the battle of life, in the great art of living nobly, must all victories be anticipated, all achievements begun, within the soul.

The second great rule for the formation of character looks not inward, but outward, and is rather nega-

tive than positive. It is expressed in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," or in such maxims as those which bid us pluck out the offending eye, or, as the old church casuists phrased it, "Avoid the occasions of sin." We are not to put ourselves in situations which make virtue difficult and temptation powerful. It was the carrying out of this important rule of life that led our forefathers, the Puritans, into the many severe restrictions which seem to us excessive. They abolished the theatre because it encouraged idleness and vice, and novel-reading for similar reasons, and all kinds of games that led to gambling. It is on the same principle that the temperance reformer pleads for total abstinence and for prohibition: he would diminish the occasions of sin. In regard to this principle in general, it is evident that it is not so easy to decide what circumstances bring temptation to others as to know what we should ourselves avoid. But this principle lies on what might be called the common-sense side of our spiritual warfare. Its application must be learned by each individual from observation and experience. It is a principle commended by all wise men, and by the natural feelings of all good peoples. It is to be feared, however, that, in our reaction from Puritanism and our love of liberty, we have disregarded too much the prudence and caution which the Puritan displayed. We are not much afraid to "stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful." Yet to avoid the occasions of temptation would seem, since we know how difficult it is at best to reach any

higher level of goodness, our simplest and easiest duty.

Another important rule of life arises from the fact that all your faults and weaknesses spring from tendencies within you that are equally susceptible of being converted into virtues or powers. Make your faults your signal posts to direct you to the fulfilment of your own highest possibilities. That is how one may interpret the obscure saying, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness." Have you a violent temper? It is a force which you can use some time to keep good iron hot and forge good tools with. "Be angry, and sin not." Spend your divine rage against the enemies of God, against the shams and evils of the world, and especially against what is evil and base in yourself. Are you naturally lazy? Turn that fault into the virtues of calmness and patience. Let your *vis inertiae* save you from aimless bustle and purposeless effort. A great labor-saving invention — I think the first safety-valve — was once made by a boy who hated work and wanted more time to play. If this be a fable, the moral is plain. Are you shy, self-conscious, and unsocial? Turn that fault into thoughtfulness and self-reliance. Are you vain and fond of admiration, desiring the world's applause? Turn that vice into a force that shall make you worthy of real esteem. Try to get friends worth having; seek the approval of the best judges; and you will come in the end to love excellence for its own sake, to care less for the praise of men than for the consciousness of deserving it. There is hardly

a fault of which we are capable which is not the result of a perverted tendency to something good. Take your faults at their source, and divert the stream the other way. Those who have never tried this important rule in the art of character-making may fancy that it does not sufficiently distinguish the evil from the good, and seems to make our vices in a manner commendable. But the contrary is the truth. If you would feel to the fullest extent the meanness and wickedness of sin, see it as the misuse of powers and sensibilities which God gave for worthy ends; see that the very essence of evil is desecration, the perverting to mean and base uses what is fit in its own nature for divine service, as Belshazzar makes his sensual revel from the wine-cups of the Lord's house. The powers with which God has endowed human nature are all good, and, if we use them according to his laws, we become temples of God; and the very outrage of our transgressions is, that whenever we sin we trespass upon holy ground. Let us try, therefore, in the very nature of our faults and trespasses, to find the means by which we approach the highest good. Make your faults your friends, and find in a fallen nature the elements that prove it a divine creation.

Another rule of life is, that we must move altogether if we move at all. Character is a unity. We want not virtues, but virtue. We want to escape not from sins, but from sin. A man who tries to grow in rightcousness by contending with one fault at a time is like Hercules striking at Hydra, finding three

new sins born for every old one decapitated; or like the man in the Gospels, to whom, when one unclean spirit had been driven from his dwelling, seven fiercer and fouler spirits came in and took possession. This is the reason why good resolutions are so notoriously ineffective. The resolutions are never large enough. The human soul is built on such a generous plan that great spiritual undertakings are often easier than small ones. Many a man who would be willing to suffer for his principles cannot bear to be laughed at on account of them. It is easier to bestow all one's goods than to suffer long and be kind. Many who could die upon the cross, cannot bear it through life with patience; and many who could renounce the world and all its vanities in some heroic crusade are unable to master some trifling self-indulgence. What we need in character-building is not good resolutions, but some principle of life, some source of inspiration, which is deep enough and wide enough to influence our whole nature all at once. It is in this respect that most of the moral philosophers, as compared with Christianity, fail us when we rely upon them for practical conduct of character-building. One offers me an ideal of self-perfection, and I follow it till I am lost in spiritual pride and isolation. Another claims me for altruism, or living for others; and I follow him till I lose the aim of self-perfection and the conception of any intrinsic, independent good. Another bids me mortify the flesh and renounce the world, till, in the endeavor to exalt the spirit above the flesh, the whole world becomes unreal and undivine.

But Christian faith, while it inspires to all these excellences, exaggerates no *one*, and escapes the dangers of all. Giving the sublimest example of love in the character of Christ, and directing to the source of love in God himself, it touches the very centre of human nature, and spreads its influence outward to every part and faculty. One of the supreme tests of true discipleship is this all-roundness of the Christian influence. The more we enter into the spirit of Christ, the more our spiritual growth becomes balanced and symmetrical.

Lastly, if our character-building is on the right plan, truly spiritual, affecting our whole nature, redeeming our faults, and holding us back from temptation as well as resisting it, our lives will show a spiritual progress. We should not fight the same battles over from year to year. The plane of our moral warfare should rise. We see in the life of Christ how, though there is one plan and purpose which makes his whole life continuous and consistent, yet there are successive stages, successive eras, in the fulfilment of his earthly mission. He has his baptism and temptation, his ministry, passion, and cross. Yet all his life is the unfolding of one divine plan. It is one vision and one purpose which is thus variously exhibited. So may it be in our lives also! The building of character, the unfolding of what is highest and best in us, is not only the principal business of our lives, but it is also the most interesting one. It is a task infinitely various, and which leads us on to finer and larger opportunities continually. He that is faithful over a few things is made master

over many. May we so live that this spiritual growth and enrichment shall really be ours! If you have this secret of a progressive life, time has no terrors.

This new year, which is just begun, will be to one a year of self-conquest, to another a year of happy achievement. It may be your year of quiet Nazareth or of mighty Jerusalem, your time of baptism in Jordan or of miracles of love in Galilee, or indeed of putting in the sickle to fields white for the harvest. It will be, it ought to be, a new and riper year for us all. And yet the new year should come to fulfil the old. No change can come, no surprise be given you, but it may take its place in the plan of your whole life. And, even if the year shall alter the current of *your* purposes, God's purpose in your life will be increasingly realized. Only in this faith in the steadfast providence of a Father who develops us by processes of orderly change, can we face cheerfully the changes of time. But, holding this vision, no past is lost, no future uncertain; for both alike are instruments to effect the one unchanging purpose of God, which is his glory and our blessedness.

Let us therefore enter this new year not as into the dwelling of a stranger, but as into another mansion of our Father's house, expecting still the familiar voices of guidance and gracious helping even though they speak some grander, some more heart-stirring word than any we have known. Let us look back upon our old year not as vanished into silence: it will speak to us always. By every blessing given, by every experience consummated, by every mystery revealed, it has its part with us and in us, it will

enrich and fructify and illumine every future God has in store.

I suppose we all recognize in a general way this unity of life. We all know that year is not divided from year, and yet this sense of the unity of life is with all of us a gradually developed insight. The child's life seems to him disconnected. Each day is a surprise. His passing purposes hardly reach from day to day. But the life that seems to himself so varied and checkered is known to his parent's eye as running on a few simple lines of growth and thought. His daily changing employments steadily contribute to his quiet, constant growth of body and mind. By and by the child himself becomes conscious of a thread of purpose running through the years. He, too, plans his future, and co-operates in the plans of those whom he trusts. The older he grows, the more these purposes reach out and unify his prospective career. He makes resolves for all time to come. He espouses with lasting vows the things that are worthiest. Men differ very much in this consciousness of the unity of life. Some seem to be children always. Year follows year, as loosely as sand in an hour-glass. But the best, wisest, most effective lives are those of men who have a strong sense of a unity running through the years. Theodore Parker always knew what his work would be for ten years to come. In some callings this would not be literally possible. But all that is highest in your life—the growth of your mind, the loyalty of your affection, the formation of your character—can be striven after in this prophetic

spirit. We all respect tenacity, faithfulness, loyalty, patient continuance. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. I think we may say that the final test of human worth is this unity of purpose, this continuousness of growth, that binds the years together, makes the child the father of the man, the man something more than a child.

And yet, dear friends, the best and wisest are as little children in the sight of the heavenly Father. To him who is Eternal your longest purposes reach but a little span. Your life has a unity which you know and strive for, just as your child's day has one childish purpose running through it. But higher than the unity of your human plans,—necessarily imperfect,—higher and better than that, is the perfect seamlessness of your life as God sees it. What seems to you interruption is but the carrying forward of a larger and holier design than yours. What seems to your time-blinded eyes a lost and broken strand is a divinely woven thread in the grand web and pattern of eternity. And one of the great rewards of faithful following after righteousness is that it gives you clearer faith in the righteousness of *God*. The more you live in the spirit (that is, the more your life is from within, and not from without), the more you are made aware of a Divine Spirit working with you. And, in the same way, the more there is in your life of spiritual growth, spiritual purpose, the more you will be able, when your own plans seem to fail, to trust the higher plan in which the wisdom of God has overruled your own.

THE TRUE PRIEST.

L ORD, who dost the voices bless
Crying in the wilderness,
And the lovely gifts increase
Of the messengers of peace,
Thou, whose temple is with men,
Show us thy true priest again.

In the holy place may he
Thy immediate presence see;
Or through deserts, Father, led,
Find thy people heavenly bread,
While his lips, at thy control,
Warn, instruct, inspire, console.

Give him, to his priestly dress,
Faith and zeal and righteousness.
Then, lest all thy gifts be lost,
Breathe thy gift of Pentecost,—
Love, whose many-lingued fire
Finds each listening soul's desire.

A SIMPLE DUTY.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!”—
Ps. ciii. 2.

THE duty of cheerfulness in our daily life is what I wish to speak of to-day.

Cheerfulness, in word, in manner, but most of all in one's real feeling, is evidently one of the most important, as it is for some people the most difficult of all our duties. It is important, because without it no life is happy: it is difficult, because few lives are so happily placed, few temperaments so wholesomely endowed, as to be always cheerful without effort.

Let me consider some of the objections to cheerfulness which are seriously urged by people who do not count it a virtue; and then some of the difficulties in the way of becoming cheerful, which are felt even by those who acknowledge the duty of so doing.

Objections to cheerfulness! How is that possible? What philosopher in his senses could ever have argued against so charming and innocent a quality? Object to cheerfulness? as well protest against rainbows and spring flowers; as well hush the laughter of children at play; as well suppress every gleam of

beauty, every thrill of pleasure that ever flashes across the many-toned web of our human existence! Suppose this world were really a vale of tears! Suppose there were, in truth, nothing substantial here but sin and sorrow, and that all is vanity and vexation of spirit! If life on earth is really a prison-house to man's immortal desires, as religion has taught and philosophy sighed, or as poets, charmed with their own woe, have proclaimed to the world in so many lovely songs, shall we improve the gloomy situation by whining and complaining? Shall we sigh less for going about with long faces, or will our tears be fewer if, in the old Roman manner, we catch them up in tear-bottles and count such lachrymose treasures our chief jewels? I do not forget the nobleness of sorrow; though I remember that the deepest and divinest sorrow earth ever saw, was able to smile above its pain, and to breathe a prayer of thanksgiving over its daily bread. But I say that, paint our human destiny black as you will, it can never cease to be our duty to maintain the virtue of cheerfulness, to bate "no jot of heart or hope," and, however dark the way, to brighten it as much as we can with love and courage and a grateful heart.

You all know that certain schools of religion and philosophy would fain deprive us of the right to a reasonable smile. They tell us creation is under a curse, life a failure, joy an illusion and a folly. I shall not waste time rehearsing their systems of pessimism, for I believe them fundamentally false. I simply say that, even on their own premises, they are

doing wrong who would cast a blight upon the natural cheerfulness which, thank God, is so common in mankind. Tell me, if you will, that around the warm hearthstone of human life, outside the walls that shelter us, a fearful storm is raging; tell me that the heavens are black, the gale furious, and that the blinding snow drifts far and wide over the hills,—what shall I do? Shall I open my windows? Shall I extinguish my fire and my lamp? Shall I invite the storm and darkness to come and fill my house, and then sit shivering there till I perish? No. I will pile on the fuel, I will draw my shutters close, I will gather my dear ones round me and pass the furious night in merry game or pleasant story. Because my house is not as wide as all out doors, shall I make myself homeless?

Be the future what it may of hell or heaven, be the universe what it may, even were there no God and Father throned there in love above the darkness, it is certain that here we find ourselves upon this green earth. Our home is here, and it is our duty to make this home the gladdest place we can. It is the manly part, it is the womanly grace, to bring into this earth-home of ours such treasures as we may of innocent joy, of honest laughter, of the warm, quiet light which true hearts make around them.

I do not suppose, indeed, that many of you are in danger from the distortions of religion and the errors of philosophy, which, taking a dark view of human life in general, incline men away from cheerfulness, on the ground that earthly happiness is unobtainable.

Nevertheless, though probably ignorant of this pessimism in the grand style, you may have a private pessimism of your own, which answers the same practical purposes. You may have adopted the idea that something in your nature, or in your peculiar experience of life, gives you a certain prerogative of melancholy. You may have decided that for you, at certain times, cheerfulness is impossible, and that to assume it would be hypocrisy.

Grant that at such times your causes of sadness are real, and your mood of depression not wholly to be overcome; yet even so, since your duty brings you into daily intercourse with others, it is a most feeble selfishness to compel your friends and your family to enter into the same cloud that shadows *your* soul, and to share, more than is necessary, the weight you inwardly feel. You have no right to cast this burden upon them. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* He alone can sustain thee. Or, as the master has said, "When thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret."

If what you want, my friend, is sympathy and pity in your troubles, whatever they may be, I assure you that people will have far more of real sympathy, of real pity, if you meet your troubles bravely and cheerfully. The truth is,—see if your own experience does not confirm what I say,—the truth is, human pity and sympathy are emotions easily fatigued. A smiling beggar will always get larger alms than a whining one. What interests us in our fellow-creatures is life

and power. From the spectacle of hopeless sorrow, of unmitigated gloom, of weak and wild complaining, healthy natures soon turn away with thinly disguised indifference. Just as poverty wins respect and sympathy most when it is brave or merry, so with sorrow, sickness, and pain. Alas! we easily harden our hearts against another's sufferings: but the coldest heart is moved with something of a brother's love, when the wounded soldier struggles to his feet and battles on; when sorrow looks through its tears with smiles of unselfish love and the light of high resolve; or when, as one so often sees, the burden of bodily suffering is taken up with patient bravery, or the twinge of sudden pain gallantly masked, with flashing jest or ready courtesy. Such are the things which move the lookers-on to passionate sympathy and helpfulness. Show that you are making a stand against your troubles, show that you are striving toward the light, and generous hearts which are near you will try to help you in the struggle. Show that in your pain you are trying to be glad, and not only your friends, but even strangers, will be honestly eager to put some gift of gladness in your hand or to strew flowers in the hard pathway of your life.

Ah, yes! human nature is very kindly. Men love to raise up the fallen, and to sing a song of cheer to one another when the night is dark. But before others can help you, you must show that you will help yourself. Before others can encourage or soothe you, you must show that you yourself are trying to be brave, trying to be calm.

If, then, anything in your own lot or nature tempts you to neglect the common and humble duty of cheerfulness, remember that it is a duty which you owe to others, a duty by which you maintain the bond of fellowship with the lives around you, a duty which you neglect at your peril, since its neglect will bring upon you loss and deprivation and weakness far greater than those which may now make cheerfulness an effort. Remember, also, that every human soul which meets misfortune nobly, confers, immediately and directly, a benefit upon the human race. For are we not all alike the children of mortal dust? Who but has some struggle to make, some burden to carry, some loss to feel? and, being, as we are, engaged in a common life-struggle or life-pilgrimage, we need each other's courage, each other's faith, each other's gladness to help us on our way. Yes, my melancholy brother, we all alike have tasted of the waters of Marah, that flow from the desert's bitter spring. By what right will you alone sit down by the way, and drink the ashy draught again, while your fellow-travellers are crying: "*Sursum corda!* Up, up, brave hearts! Let us rise and press onward together." Is there none who needs your helping hand? Is there no heavy heart that needs your smile and your word of hope? Alas, alas, for selfish sadness! how *unrelieved* it is, how fruitless, and how incurable!

I have spoken, then, of cheerfulness as a duty. I have faced the objections which rise from false and gloomy views of life in general; or from a wrong attitude in regard to one's own life in particular; and I

have asserted, as strongly as I know how, that there is no rational frame of mind, no circumstance in any life, in which it is not our duty to be cheerful, to repress the train of darker musings, and to turn our faces to the light.

But thus far I have not spoken the whole truth on this matter. I have urged you to cheerfulness, as if the neglect of this virtue were the peculiar temptation of those who have had a large experience of suffering. *But it is not so.* The contrary is the truth. The fact is, that people who have real troubles to bear, cannot venture to indulge themselves in the luxury of melancholy moods. My observation has been that the people whose cheerfulness is most remarkable are usually those who have the best reasons for groanings and sinking of heart, if they chose, or if they dared. The very greatness of their calamities has, as it were, forced them in self-defence to fly to the sources of comfort, to seek out the deeper springs of joy; and so God has given them "songs in the night." They have cherished every ray of faith and trust in God, they have turned themselves thoughtfully and tenderly to the needs of others, they have conscientiously watched for every gleam of gladness in their path, so that year by year their faces have grown brighter, and their words and daily lives have brought cheer and hope to many struggling souls. No: I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is not those who have been most greatly afflicted, who go through the world with dejected looks and airs of unmitigated woe. *Real* trouble is not the cause of melancholy.

The pains which *God* calls us to bear are not those which fill the soul with darkness, and take all gladness out of life. On the contrary, as I call to mind the people I have thought most lacking in the charm and virtue of cheerfulness, I can see *that their miseries were self-made*. Setting aside cases of actual disease, though often what is called the disease is as much effect as cause, you will find that habitual lowness of spirits, a complaining tone in the voice, a sour aspect in the countenance, are almost invariably due to some blameworthy weakness of character, to lack of faith, or feeble self-pity, or groundless fears, or bitter pride.

My friend, how is it with yourself? When were you most lacking in decent self-control, most inconsiderate of the feelings of others, and, in your uncheerful mood, most disagreeable? It was not in the hour of your great trial, and your most arduous strife,—oh, no! *God sustained you then*. Was it not rather on the occasion of some petty vexation, under the discomfort of some trifling illness? Was it not the day when, for some reason or no reason, you were disgracefully absorbed in the thought of your own feelings or your own dignity, and therefore forgetful of your duty, slack in your prayers, cold in your affections, and altogether gone astray from your better self?

While I ask you, then, to strive for cheerfulness as a virtue, I ask you also to think of its opposite as a sin and as something which can be remedied. To this end let me make a brief “anatomy of melan-

choly," and consider some of the most common and interior causes of it.

They are three,—fear and selfishness and impiety. First, fear: Of all causes for depression of spirits, this is the most common and insidious. How much we suffer, it has been said, from the evils we never endured! Now, even if we had not the highest authority for the principle, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," it is evident that a fearful and apprehensive mind is a pitiful weakness. God has indeed given to man, as he apparently has not to the lower animals, a power of forecasting future events and of providing for them. But, surely, this power, limited as it is,—for who can tell what a day may bring forth?—was not designed to fill our lives with sad forebodings, but to give us nobler field for effort, to fill us with high hope and courage. Let us be "children of the *promise*." Let not the faculty of onward-looking vision, the sublime gift which makes us little lower than the angels, be misused to make life a gloomy bondage. If you will permit yourself to dream of what the future years will bring, though it is at best a childish occupation, try to picture what your life may be if you yourself were wiser and worthier than to-day. If you are living as you ought, fulfilling this season's duty, and forgetting not God's present benefits, you have no right to be afraid.

Secondly, selfishness, that ambiguous word. A common cause of low spirits is selfishness. It may be in the form of pride. How much of discontent and bitterness is only a wounded vanity! How much of

well-bred melancholy is only an affectation of superior sensitiveness of soul! This is the fretfulness of the *dilettante*. This makes the gloomy face which one not seldom sees in the resorts of fashion and worldly splendor. The gay world, forsooth, is not gay enough, for the jaded nerves of the man or woman who has lived too long under its glaring lights. Or these coarse, common surroundings of daily life are not good enough, alas! for the exquisite tastes and idle fancies of the dainty youth or high-strung maiden, who imagines that fault-finding and discontent are signs of some knowledge of the world. Oh, how easy, yet how pitiful, is this "seat of the scornful"! And pitiful that so many, who do little enough to make the world better, nourish their fastidiousness till it becomes the spirit of contempt, and so of sadness and unrest!

Then there is the evil pride which comes of some delusion as to what the world owes one,—the false pride and false shame which embitter so many lives! How many feeble souls go on year after year in the dreary business of wishing or pretending to be what they are not! The struggle to keep up appearances, to seem and not be, the vain appetite for being rated by the world as somewhat richer or cleverer or more important than one really is,—how many characters are hardened, how many tempers soured, by this foolish mistake! I have seen homes which ought to have been happy, darkened by these evil spirits of false pride and false shame, so that the shadow fell on every one who crossed the threshold. Half the petty miseries of existence come from the desire for a con-

ventional recognition, the thought of "what people will say," the sigh for fame, the struggle for notoriety. These forms of selfishness take out of a life the power of simple happiness, and, instead of cheerful independence and honest self-respect, fill men with mean disquietudes and fantastic disappointments. If you would be cheerful, be independent, be simple, be contented with your lot, and let your fastidious criticisms be few. If your chief interest in life is yourself, your own pursuits, your feelings, your dignity, it is impossible for you to be happy anywhere, and more and more your moods of melancholy and disappointment are going to grow.

But as yet I have kept on the outside of my subject. Cheerfulness is not altogether in the control of your will. It is a virtue, yet more than a virtue. If you are to be steadfastly, genuinely, unaffectedly cheerful, you must have a cheerful religion. There is no eclipse so dark as the eclipse of faith. I do not wonder that some kinds of religion drive men mad. The wonder is that the terrible conceptions men have cherished concerning God and the future in the unseen world, and sin and death in the seen, have not made the whole race hypochondriac. There is nothing like religion for affecting the whole tone of the mind, and influencing for good or evil every possible mood.

Therefore, if a man's religion be dark and unconsoling, he must be gloomy indeed. In fact, I know of no more remarkable evidence of the natural courage and cheerfulness of human nature than that the super-

natural terrors, which superstition adds to the real evils of life, still leave the multitudes who believe them with some liberty to smile and sing.

But let us be thankful that in our day and generation, religion more and more comes to men as a gospel, comes as a refuge, and a gift of joy. Faith need be no longer the tyrannous suppression of reason, a pall of gloom cast over the beautiful world. Rather it is the bow of peace and promise that spans across the stormy waters of life, and bids us look up through the darkness to the everlasting light.

Without religion, then, and a cheerful religion, the best kind of cheerfulness is a virtue well-nigh impossible.

I know there is a kind of pagan gladness that is not touched by faith. Just as the fair old tombs of Greece and Rome are carved with dancing figures, that wave the vine, or chase the bounding deer along the valley, so there is a kind of defiant choice of the joy and beauty of the world even in the very presence of life's darker aspects. But I need not say that cheerfulness so won is a very unstable, a very superficial brightness. The pagan is glad because he defies: the Christian is glad because he trusts and hopes. The pagan's cheerfulness is but a mood, a virtue for the strong, or for the hour of health and strength. But the Christian's cheerfulness is not a mood: it is a principle. He knows he has no right to go through the world with an unthankful heart. He knows that evil is for a day, and good eternal. And so he feels that cheerfulness is not only the manly part, not only his duty

to himself and to his friends, but also that it is his duty to God, and the condition of receiving yet higher blessings.

Some one will say this is where my sermon should have begun. But, then, I could have said no more than the ancient word,—“*Be thankful unto the Lord, and bless his name.*”

For the quality which turned toward men is called cheerfulness, when turned toward God is thankfulness. The same suspicious and complaining selfishness which makes us sour and low-spirited in our human relations, is the very groundwork of doubt and mistrust in all our thoughts of God. The brave and happy heart is most congenial soil for faith to grow in. Only when we have overcome our petty temper of discontent, only when our small selfishness and poor fastidiousness are laid by, can we honestly look up to heaven and say, “Yes, this is our Father’s world.” If we would really *bless the Lord* in our souls, we must not “*forget his benefits.*” We must keep the grateful heart; we must turn our faces daily to the sunshine; and then more and more we shall know that God’s sun is shining always.

AUTUMN.

THOUGH the Autumn's dying glory
Flames along the lordly hill,
Love will tell no mournful story,
Faith not feel the season's chill.

Leaves may fall, but all their fading
Steals no life of living tree;
Still, through deeper cells pervading,
Thrills the life we cannot see.

Hush, my heart, thy fancies dreary!
Autumn's sadness is a cheat.
Forests rest when they are weary,
And their winter sleep is sweet.

Buds beneath the branches dreaming,
Roots that slumber in the snow,
Whisper, "Death is but a seeming,
Life the only truth we know."

THE SINS OF MIDDLE LIFE.

“When the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.”— MARK iv. 6.

EACH period of life has its peculiar dangers and temptations. The text suggests that there are certain catastrophes which befall the noon-tide of life, when the sun is up; and the thing which has no root is scorched and withered away. It is a well-known fact that large numbers of fairly decent, blameless people arrive, in middle life, at a period of moral apathy and spiritual blindness. Many others, hitherto irreproachable, suddenly suffer a moral collapse, to the astonishment of the community. Sometimes these shipwrecks on the high seas are of leaky vessels, long suspected as unseaworthy. But, also, there are many cases of men (of women not so many) who, having lived honest and clean lives through all their early years, seem to yield in middle life to some unexpected strain. Are there any reasons for these facts? What are the general characteristics of middle age which make it a time of moral danger?

Very noticeable is the fact that many of the moral safeguards of youth are then removed, such as the influence of parents, the timidity of inexperience, or

the limitations of ignorance and poverty. Conventional maxims and standards lose their authority, and moral distinctions which seemed perfectly clear to the youthful conscience, become questionable and confused. People whose characters have had no root in inner conviction, then discover that their conduct hitherto has been an imitation, a respectful conformity to social customs. But, naturally, a little experience of the world shows how hollow many of its standards are; and that important safeguard of virtue — a respect for appearances — naturally grows weaker, the longer one lives.

Moreover, as the external safeguards of youthful virtue slowly dissolve, some of the inspirations of youth grow feeble also. In early life our strongest incentives to a good life are found in personal ambition, in love, and in religion. All this changes, in different ways for different people, about the period of middle life.

Personal ambition, by that time, is either somewhat gratified or somewhat discouraged. In either case, unless higher motives come in, there must be some disillusion. The struggling clerk, the rising young workman, in any calling, is well aware that any moral transgression or stain puts his whole future in peril. But in middle life, successful or unsuccessful, a man has opportunity to look about him. He sees that bad men sometimes get off unpunished. He sees that simple faithfulness does not always bring a visible reward. He looks back upon his own blameless record; and, if he be a man of no real principle,

he wonders if he has not been over-scrupulous. He says, with the Psalmist, "I have cleansed my heart in vain." Whether virtue really is the best policy, whether the game is worth the candle, now becomes a matter of doubt in his mind. And, therefore, if during his youth a man has been honorable, temperate, and so on, just for reasons of prudence, he may find in middle life, in some trying time of temptation and calamity, that his old motives suddenly fail him. He has no longer any motives: he has only good habits. For either he finds he no longer desires fame and success, or he is forced to see that what he thought was success—as wealth, celebrity, office—may be won without virtue.

Then, just as personal ambition, if rooted in unworthy motives, fails when youth is past, so the inspiration of love, which makes youth or maiden capable of the noblest things, becomes, if its pure flame be stained by sordid compromise and low aims, the source of the bitterest disillusion. Thank God, all true men and women, if they have loved worthily and happily, keep for their life long this incentive to all that is best and loveliest in human character. But, as middle life comes on, the illusions which attend all early passion are dissipated; and what remains is either dust and ashes, or a great spiritual force, the joy and glory of life. There can be no question that many of the moral failures of middle age, perhaps the greater number of them, are due to the loss or perversion of this powerful and elevating incentive.

Or consider the power of religion upon conduct! The essence of religion can never change. But no man at fifty has the same religion as at twenty. Especially in a time of swift movements of thought, our creeds and opinions must either variate or die. And, therefore, in middle life the moral incentives of religion, once the most powerful, are much enfeebled or wholly disappear. If the man's creed was irrational, it crumbles away. If his religion was a mere conventionality and imitation, it becomes dead and cold. Unhappily, irrational religion and imitative religion are extremely common. Some people are taught in youth to associate all virtue with certain dogmas and certain legends. They are taught, even from the pulpit, that, if these dogmas and legends are not true, there is no reason why a man should be better than a beast. They are taught that right and wrong are not natural, but supernatural distinctions. Many men, therefore, as they lose the supernatural basis of their creeds, become confused about the conduct of life.

There are, then, these various reasons why middle age is a period of spiritual danger. One is then on the high sea of the voyage of life; and, though a shipwreck on the high sea is rare, yet, if it comes, no other is more disastrous.

Far be it from me, to imply that any of the dangers I have described are inevitable. I only mention them as moral facts. But, while we see in the loss of the safeguards and inspirations of youth some explanation of the moral disasters of middle life,

how shall we explain the more subtle danger of mere apathy, dulness, and commonplace?

No one can deny that these effects are real and conspicuous. Middle-aged! There is something depressing in the very syllables. Youth is the time of charm and promise; and age makes itself venerable and pathetic with the wisdom of experience, and the strange, soft light of immortality that silvers the evening of earth's little day. Between these picturesque extremes lies the period which the poet shuns and the romancer conceals, which has no attractiveness to the imagination,—uninteresting, commonplace middle age, the dusty highway of the heated term. Yet this middle period, æsthetically and poetically at such disadvantage, appears to the moralist a most important part of human life on earth,—a time not less critical than youth and far more significant. For it is the time of realization, of self-revealing, when the whole man appears at last, with all his characteristics fully developed. While it is doubtless true that in early life character is chiefly formed, yet the individuality is seldom fully displayed until later. Buds and seeds are more alike than flowers are. Middle age is the earthly apex of individuality.

This fact explains what seems like moral deterioration. It is not that the man or woman is changed, but unmasked. The bloom and gaiety of girlhood concealed for a time the cold heart, the mean nature. The vigorous health of boyhood, pervaded by a happy flush of youthful spirits, diverted the indulgent look-

ers-on from noticing the coarse mind within. Rashness and folly were thought to be but the mistakes of inexperience: unsteady purposes, a want of self-control, and general inefficiency, were charitably and hopefully overlooked as youthful weaknesses, soon to be outgrown.

But the time comes at last—and it is this fatal hour, not the flight of time, which announces that the spring-time of life is over—when we imagine in our hearts that our faults of character are constitutionally inveterate, and that the wheat and the tares must stand together in the field until the harvest day. Is there any weakness or evil which you no longer expect to eradicate from your nature? There is the part of your being which is no longer young!

Thank God, there are those whose spiritual and moral life is an immortal youth, whose eye for heavenly truth is never dimmed, whose force for moral endeavor is never abated. Of these one may truly say, "They go from strength to strength!" "They will be still praising Thee." Such souls life educates, but does not stain. The disappointments of experience only elevate their purposes and increase their charity. The passage of years, not making them "weary of well-doing," brings into their faces something better than the roundness of youth, refining and ennobling every outline, and giving to brave, honest eyes the brightness of the beautiful soul behind them.

Yet for the commoner souls there certainly comes in middle life a time of moral apathy. Why is it?

One reason is, that most men and women have by that time, as we say, "settled down"; that is, have found out more or less their places in the world, have finished with experiments, have somewhat estimated their possible careers, and chosen definite paths. With this settling-down process comes a sense of limitation. The pleasant vagrancy of youth is gone, and with it some illusions, some liberty, some hopes. The man of sentiment may fancy that in the process he has changed from a butterfly to a grub, and indulge a regretful sigh for his vanished wings. But the man of action — *i.e.*, every serious-minded person — recognizes these limitations of mature life as bringing in the gains of concentrated energy and profitable service.

With this limitation of life, however, comes the spiritual danger of narrowed sympathies. The selfishness of youth is thoughtless: the selfishness of middle life is systematic. It is the spirit which makes a man say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" So, then, if there be in a man's heart only a feeble interest in his fellow-men, that feebleness is likely to increase when the generous impulses of youth have been cooled down by contact with a hard, selfish world. The danger of "settling down" is that one may settle down to compromise and hardness of heart. The man whose career has succeeded, thinks the world a place where a man generally gets what he deserves, and looks indifferently on at the struggles and difficulties of others. The man who has been disappointed, having had hard experience of fortune, and ill content

with a universe which has not given him his due, concludes that his neighbor can bear ill luck as well as he. In either case, the danger is of losing the ideal aspects of living, and of relapsing into the humdrum of drudgery or self-pleasing, with the dull assertion that every man must look out for his own. The full consciousness of the brotherhood of man, of our membership in a common life, is natural to generous youth as yet unspotted from the world; or to the long-matured experience of him who has outlived the delusions of selfishness; but, because of the strong individualization which is the mark of middle life, the burdens of private care or the unrest of personal ambitions somewhat blind the spiritual vision to the truth that no man liveth unto himself.

Understand me that I do not refer now to selfishness, in general, as the root of all evil, but only to that type of it which distinguishes middle life,—a busy worldliness, a prosaic absorption in the material conditions of one's own life. As the once inspired poet degenerates into an affected specimen of literary vanity, as the once ambitious young patriot becomes the victim of machine politics and a seeker after spoils, so in any career, the "glow of early thought" may decline in middle life to some base uses. Said a famous old sculptor to a young one, in the flood-tide of his first successes, and just turned of thirty, "Now, my young friend, I want you to get your second wind." Men become imitators of their own past. They lose communication with the great and ever-present sources of life in nature, in them, in God, and become the

dupes of their own imperfect experiments. They are caught, like the lame spider, in their own web of conventionalities and half-truths. In intellectual vocations, vigorous minds often boldly cut loose from these self-limitations of middle age. Sir Walter Scott drops poetry, and begins novels. Michel Angelo puts his sculptures into frescoed walls. Raphael changes his style, and takes new themes. The poet tries new forms, and the artist a new palette. For ordinary mortals this renewal of spontaneity seems impossible. That is what makes us ordinary.

The moral and spiritual life, likewise, unless there is some new expansion and departure, falls into spiritless routine. Men and women who add nothing to the creed of their youth, become mere creatures of conventionality and custom.

These general dangers of middle age take on different forms with different people. The worldly, materialistic type of selfishness, in well-balanced natures, may never transgress from prudence and decorum into the paths of vice and crime. It may appear only as a loss of faith and enthusiasm, as a general coldness, or as an unblushing cynicism. But when, for any reason, the slavery of habit and routine has narrowed thought, and deadened feeling, human nature exhibits its ridiculous littleness; and the man becomes, like one of Dickens's comic characters, a puppet that always dances on one string.

Now, what circumstances of middle life are calculated to withstand these processes of moral decay? What incentives and inspirations countervail these "cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches"?

It is one of the compensations of life that, as the pressure of advancing years tends to harden and individualize us, very powerful incentives of another kind appear, which, in nobler and stronger natures, are sufficient to soften and keep the heart alive. As we pass through middle age, the most solemn and affecting experiences of human life are almost certain to touch us.

On the one side comes the claim of the children. Either in their own homes or in another's, self-absorbed men and women see these new comers, and feel the glad dependence of childhood upon every mature life. Dickens's "Christmas Carol" and the host of stories like it (such as that pretty one about "Timothy's Quest") have made this saving grace of childhood one of the standard themes of modern literature. Every child is a rebuking angel to all materialism and humdrum. It is in middle life that we are naturally most susceptible to this influence.

At the same time it surely happens in middle life that, one by one, our older friends, "the old familiar faces," are seen no more. Many persons pass through a prolonged youth without ever knowing any personal bereavement. Not so with life's middle term. This is inevitably overshadowed here and there with some experience of sorrow; and we begin, as never before, to "keep watch o'er man's mortality."

Thus, as we get midway between "the cradle and the grave," there come to us from both, influences which soften, hallow, and elevate. As the world hardens us, as our capacity of emotion seems growing

less, come the heart-moving events of birth and death, with their unspeakable depths of love and pain, demanding of the soul a fulness of emotion and an increasing spirituality.

The tendency of life is always twofold. If it does not make us worse, it makes us better. Our affections deepen or run shallow. Grief embitters or ennobles. Prosperity vulgarizes or refines. Our work becomes more and more possessed of ideal aims, or more a drudgery and servitude. One's intelligence grows clearer as the riches of experience are added, or it becomes more and more confused, till it half loses faith in the youthful passion for truth.

Therefore it is that, in general, the multiplying experiences and opportunities of middle life either strengthen the whole spiritual nature or make it suffer an eclipse. The ideal aspects of life, unless vigorously followed, are prone to fade away. All the dangers of middle life are but different forms of the decay which is inevitable when our ideals are obscured.

Consider, as an example of this, that duty in which of all others it is easiest to see its ideal aspect of loving service,—I mean the duties of motherhood and fatherhood. These obligations, so exalted, so awe-inspiring, so delightful, fill the heart of the young parent with that wondering, humble joy which the old painters put into the face of the mother of Christ. Yet even here, time and custom bring their soul-numbing power. The hurried, worried, overburdened head of a family loses sight of what the real

duties are, which make the relation a holy ordinance of God. Motherhood, "cumbered with much serving, and careful about many things," begins to take the life-blood out of woman's very soul. She begins to find that this holiest mission of her womanhood is an affair of new frocks and doctor's prescriptions. Then there are the new method and the old method, and schools, hygiene, rebellions. What a confusion it is! and how fatiguing! Yet, after all, a mother is human; and therefore it profits her nothing if, for herself or her children, she gain the whole world and lose her soul or theirs. That is the supreme test of it all.

Ah! my dear, energetic little woman, remember that you are the mother of a soul! Remember how that sweet, unknown mother of the Christ followed him to Jerusalem, and stood beside his cross! Remember that by and by these little children, these charming animals, will be men and women, with all the largeness of our human life in them. Do not so narrow your life, do not so forget your highest and best thought, that your children can ever graduate from your curriculum. Do not be a drudge; do not be a nursery-policeman: be the mother of a soul. And remember that is the good part which can never be taken from you,—no, never, neither by life, nor death, nor absence, nor any earthly trouble.

And what is true for the mother is for the father as well. It is frightful what opportunity there is in our present state of society for the male head of a family to lose all but the material side of his duty.

And yet "the power of the father" (*patria potestas*) is, in our society, altogether moral and spiritual. If he is not, to all his children during their childhood, the dearest friend, the most trusted counsellor, their sought-for guide in all dangers and temptations, how can he hope to retain his influence afterwards?

But these are only examples of the large truth that all human duties and relationships have their material and their ideal side. Narrow yourself to the material and mechanical, and your soul will starve. With nothing but technique, you cannot paint a picture. With nothing but industry, you cannot do your work in the world, so that your mind and heart shall grow at the same time.

Middle age, then, is a time that tries men's souls. At no period do we stand more in need of all that quickens the mind, touches the heart, and deepens faith in the Unseen. It is the time when the world's idolatries should appear in all their hollowness and falsity. If you have been worshipping success, if you have worshipped yourself, the disillusion will certainly come. But, if you have never lost the child-heart, with its clear perception of right and wrong, if you have never grown cold in affection or slack in service, if you have ever been ready to increase in knowledge, and increase in love, if you are open-hearted and broad-minded, then you need not fear the scorching noon-day of life.

Because it had no root, it withered away. Look to the roots of your life! Do not dare to withhold them from the deeper soil! The stony ground of self-

ishness and worldliness,—there is no life there! But be rooted and grounded in love. Do not dare to cut yourself off from the great brotherhood of our common life! Only in the love of God, only in the following of the divine work of love for men, can the secret of immortal youth be found.

A LITANY.*

WHEN the world around us throws
All its proud, deceiving shows,
Yet the heart no danger knows,
Help us, Lord most holy!

When like sheep we go astray,
When we cast thy gifts away,
When we only seem to pray,
Help us, Lord most holy!

By the joys that look above,
By the pains our faith to prove,
By the conquering power of love,
Help us, Lord most holy!

To our sinful selves to die,
Base desires to crucify,
And to set our hearts on high,
Help us, Lord most holy!

Thus to do thy will below,
Daily in thy grace to grow,
More and more thy love to know,
Help us, Lord most holy!

* Written to music, Hymnal "Amore Dei," No. 138.

THE CONFLICT OF DUTIES.

“Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought good work upon me.”—MATT. xxvi. 10.

EVERY one knows the story,—the woman who pours the precious ointment on the Master’s feet, the disciple who rebukes this waste of treasure, and Jesus taking sides, not as you might have expected, with him who pleaded for what seemed the larger use of a precious thing, but with the loving impulse which had prompted Mary of Bethany to pay her Master this seemingly fanciful and useless tribute.

We have here, it seems, the familiar conflict between your duty to some one near you and to other lives further off, but in greater need, or of the conflict between any claims that lie in wholly different directions, yet both appealing strongly to your sense of what is right and generous.

These conflicting claims of duty are sometimes among the hardest experiences of life and most painful to the most conscientious people. Is there not a suggestion in this gospel story of the principles that must enter into all such cases?

Notice that Jesus, on other occasions, sometimes decides in favor of the narrower, sometimes of the

wider, field of action. Better be reconciled to one's brother than to bring a gift to the altar,—that is, the narrower against the wider service; but another disciple, who asked, "Let me go first and bury my father," is commanded to leave even that sacred duty and to follow the Messiah. He himself also, twice rejects his mother seeking him, and declares that all who do his Father's will are equally his own. Thus we see constantly in our Master's life that the question of wide and narrow, large or small, does not enter. To him the greatness of an opportunity was not measured by the number of persons immediately concerned, but by the *quality* of act put forth. His few words to the woman of Samaria were as precious and fruitful as his preaching to the multitudes in Galilee or his rebuke to the rulers of Jerusalem. He neither sought publicity nor shunned it. The multitudes followed after him, not he after the multitudes. His great actions, his great words, *never* sprang from any inquiry as to their effect upon a smaller or greater number of persons, but always from the spontaneous movement of his whole nature to what was holiest, highest, and best, because of its intrinsic worthiness before God. His first concern, then, was never with the appearance or effect of his life upon other *men*, but with its intrinsic quality, its conformity to the will and the character of his Father in heaven.

Here, then, is one principle which often helps in conflicts of duty,—that our first concern is with the quality of life.

The desire to do good to others is indeed a stirring of what is highest in our natures and a reflection in us of the divine love itself. But you often need to remember that the greatest service you can render to a fellow-creature is to show him what in your own soul is best and "likest God," and so to bring him the help and inspiration of a higher life.

This is what the apostle means when he says that, if we have not *charity*, nothing we can give, though it were our bodies to be burned, is of any use. In the deepest sense, it is not what you bring to other men of your possessions and your talents that helps the world forward, but what you give of yourself in giving them. The *quality* of life is our first concern.

How often we take hold of these things from the wrong end! It is taught us as one of our Christian duties that we should visit the sick and help the poor.

Many people, therefore, in a mechanical, lifeless way go about (as they think) "doing good." All who truly love the sick and the poor know what an encumbrance this formal and lifeless philanthropy is to the real work of bringing life, help, and strength to suffering men. Suppose you were sick yourself, or very poor, anxious, and discouraged; which would you like best,—to have some bustling individual come in with a basket and a tract,—or would you rather have that person come, even with empty hands, who took away your fear, your discouragement, who made you feel that human love is strong and true, that God is faithful, and who, after sitting with you a little while, left behind that spiritual light which follows

such angels of God? All your gifts and all your doing good to the poor are of little worth indeed unless you bring with them, and express by their means, the highest quality of life; unless to all the lesser givings you can add this precious spikenard of love, and nobleness, and true prayer, so that as in Bethany of old "the whole house is filled with the odor of that ointment."

Nowhere more than in the choice between conflicting duties is it plainly true that the motive makes the deed.

It is this high quality of the life inspiring the action, that makes any action worthy. This is equally true, whether it be in a wider or narrower circle of claims, that the action lies. To know the merit of the choice, you must know what kind of spiritual life lies behind it. Sometimes a man's conscientious loyalty to personal claims leads him to give what seems almost too precious to sacrifice. How many a faithful and excellent son, in order to be of immediate service to his family, has sacrificed his education, changed his career, and adopted a mode of life for which neither his tastes nor capacities fitted him!

We honor in our hearts the man who thus sacrifices the scholar's life, because we have the secret sense that such self-sacrificing love, such faithfulness and patience, is nobler and better, is a greater spiritual conquest, than any intellectual achievement. Yet it is by no means certain in any particular case that this greatness of soul is the moving power. There are some who claim the merits of self-renunciation

for what is little more than spiritual inertia. This sacrifice of a higher activity for the sake of mere bread-winning may not spring from pure love and faithfulness. It may come from some false standard in the man's own mind, or in that of his friends, as to real values of life. He may set himself to earn money for that which is not bread and labor for that which satisfieth not. To maintain, let us say, the conventional requirements of the social position which his family claim, to gratify the social ambitions of some worldly-minded woman, or to meet some soft requirement of luxury and self-indulgence in his own habits, many a widely gifted man has renounced his higher life and made himself, not a martyr to poverty or to domestic love and duty, but a martyr to Mammon, "the ruler of the darkness of this world." Such sacrifices bring no peace to the soul, and such martyrdom no crown, because they were not born in the first place of heroism, love, and spiritual light, but of mere timidity and worldliness.

Is it not true, then, that in every such conflict of duties the rightness of one's choice lies far more in the spirit and motive of the decision than in the after consequences? Satisfy your conscience, follow your highest sense of right, and, come what may, you need never regret or feel ashamed. Let me pass from this point to another principle which helps us in the conflict of duties. We see it in the reply of the youthful Jesus in the temple: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Or again in the saying, "Father, save me from this hour: but for this

cause came I to this hour." What I mean is that those duties are first which fit in with your sense of your *vocation* in God's world, and which belong to the unity of your life, to the best use of your talents so far as you know them. In other words, some duties are constructive, and help to build up and strengthen your powers for the rendering of still greater service in the same line. Many so-called claims are to things that waste and scatter us. Your first duty is to maintain the integrity of your vocation and to do those things which are related to the central work and purpose of your life. Let every man have his vocation. Let every life be a consistent whole. We all have some instinctive sense of this. Any morning newspaper can suggest to you many admirable lines of usefulness which you distinctly know are not your business. The great benefit of having plan, purpose, and wholeness in your life, is that it saves you so many perplexing questions of detail. It is the idle, purposeless individual who is perpetually debating what to do next. Once organize your life around some central purpose, and all the floating motives and varied claims of your unpurposed life will begin to crystallize and become definite. Such a consistent purposed life need not be narrow. There are some people, indeed, as there are horses, who should always be driven with blinders, to keep them on the road. But any strong, large nature can see widely and act in many varied lines, yet not fail to co-ordinate and organize life. Whatever is done by one of these constructive natures, you feel the force of the whole

personality behind it; but, on the other hand, how many characters there are which seem to have no inner consistency, nor even any outward unity! Such lives are moved to and fro by changeable impulses and the mere accidents of their lot, being, as the apostle says, like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. There is something of this spiritual vagabondage in us all. How shall we have more of a unifying power in our lives?

Never can we do it fully by any plan of work, by any ambition, however large, for outward result, though these plans and ambitions all help to steady the will and save the waste of powers. The only purpose that can give real unity to life is some spiritual purpose, some moral ambition, some aim that reaches above the outward and changing condition of life to the very centre of life itself. Suppose it is simply your purpose in all circumstances to be a brave, true, and honest man. The very presence of that motive in you gives unity to your character and consistency to all that you do. Or suppose your spiritual ambition is far broader and higher. Suppose it were the highest possible; namely, that, like your Master, you should always carry in your heart and express in every action something of the love of God our Father for men. The larger your spiritual aspiration, the higher it reaches toward Infinite Love, the more broadly it flows out to your fellow-men, the greater the range and variety of action which it will be possible for you to make truly your own. You cannot make your life a unity by your intellectual consistency, but only

by the dominance in you of some great power of love, some mastering desire after righteousness.

And so in every seeming conflict of duties we have this principle: choose that which is the expression of your highest self, do that thing which is in the best sense worthily *characteristic* of you. In the lower plane this comes to us as faithfulness to our calling and vocation among men. On the higher plane it comes to us as faithfulness to our own best spiritual insight. Of two apparent duties, that alone is truly yours which inspires you to your true life as a child of God.

Thus far I have spoken as if our highest duty were to ourselves and to the quality and consistency of our own lives; but is goodness only a branch of self-culture? Have we not duties to others which are far higher than any we can owe ourselves? Was not the life of Jesus a perpetual self-giving? Yet remember how he said such things as "*My peace I leave with you,*" "*Fulfil ye my joy,*" "*I speak that which I have seen of my Father.*" Remember that the truest benefit you can bring to any brother soul is the gift of life; and you can only impart what you have. Such peace and joy and light as God shall give you it will be your dearest blessing to *give* as freely as you have received; but, to "let your light shine," the light must be already in you. And so the duty of *giving*, the duty of distribution, though not second to any other, is nevertheless dependent upon the quality and constructiveness of your life.

Let us consider finally this glad duty of *distribut-*

ing the gifts which is laid upon us all. Now, in our earthly conditions the very idea of giving implies some inequality between giver and receiver. You feel your brother's need, and give to his emptiness of your greater store. This divine compassion is a holy thing, and it is good to feel this claim of a brother's weakness upon our strength. But this is not the highest form of giving, still less the highest gladness of it. Even here on earth we have some foretaste of the manner in which the angels are said to share their gifts of heavenly joy, not moved by the sight of emptiness in each other, but because their own natures overflow with love, and it is more blessed to give than to receive. This giving which is the *overflow* of your life toward other lives, the natural utterance of some music in you, the spontaneous tribute of your life-treasure, as one king gives to some brother prince whom he delights to honor,—when your heart touches that largeness of a heavenly charity, is it not the crown of all other blessedness?

It is this which Jesus approved when Mary of Bethany poured out costly spikenard on her Master's head. He saw in this large and royal way of giving, a spirit which must enter into all the actions by which you would really bring a benefit to any brother soul. We cannot always remain in this exalted mood of overflowing love. The poor are always with you. Always with you is the claim of human weakness and need; but only rarely are you visited by the heavenly enthusiasm such as the Master's presence brought to those who loved him. I think the lesson of the

story is that in this higher kind of giving we have the type of what all gifts should be. *Give because you overflow.* In all your ministries to human need let this largeness of soul be felt. The poor ye have always with you; and, O my friends, none feel so quickly as the poor and suffering do, the vast difference between your sorrowful pity of them and your life-giving abundant love,—the love which does not stoop as to one below it, but feels itself glad and honored as one who serves the King. Have you never said, in some weakness or poverty of your own: “I do not want another’s pity, making me ashamed. Come to me, my strong brother, as my equal and my friend. Let me know, by the largeness and freedom of your goodness to me, that you see in me not this poor creature who needs you, but the Christ in me, the nobler self in me, which you honor as it struggles to light”? If you have felt this claim in your own heart, let it be the interpretation of what that love is which you owe to others,—the love which is the overflowing of your life; the love which honors itself, and goes forth on the errand of mercy, as if to meet the King.

Does some one say: “I fail of this *abundance* of life. Mine cannot be the overflowing heart. I know the hardness, but not the joy, of my Master’s service”? But are you sure? Have you not in all your nature one gift and quality that has this overflowing power? What possible life of our frail nature can be abundant all round? Can you not find, like Mary in that humble home in Bethany, some one

treasure you may spare? Begin where you can. Follow that one line in your life where your heart reaches out gladly to the larger good. In that one line, in that one poor treasure which you spend in an enthusiastic affection, you will find the secret of life, and so go on from more to more.

And so, finally, I would draw from this golden story these three helps in the conflicting claims of duty:—

Strive for the higher quality of life, as contrasted with mere outward effectiveness. Seek those things which are constructive, which make your life a consistent whole. And, finally, cultivate your best enthusiasms. Learn “how to abound,” until all your service both of God and man shall be—what some of it is now,—not a painful struggle, but overflowing song.

THY BROTHER.

WHEN thy heart, with joy o'erflowing,
Sings a thankful prayer,
In thy joy, O let thy Brother
With thee share!

When the harvest sheaves ingathered
Fill thy barns with store,
To thy God, and to thy Brother
Give the more!

If thy soul, with power uplifted,
Yearn for glorious deed,
Give thy strength to serve thy Brother
In his need!

Hast thou borne a secret sorrow
In thy lonely breast?
Take to thee thy sorrowing Brother
For a guest!

Share with him thy bread of blessing,
Sorrow's burden share!
When thy heart enfolds a Brother,
God is there.

LOT'S WIFE.

“Remember Lot’s wife.”—LUKE xvii. 32.

THROUGH storm and fire the family of Lot were being led forth by the hand of God from the burning cities of the plain. Lot’s wife turned to look back, and became a pillar of salt,—an object still pointed out to travellers on the shores of the Dead Sea. It is one of those delightful legends that are found among the folk-lore of all nations. The fable is characteristic of the race from which it sprung. For the fathers of the Hebrew people were the wandering tribes of the desert. Their temple was the enlargement of a tent and camp, and in the East a pilgrimage is to this day a favorite expression of piety.

The legends of the patriarchal age of Abraham, of Lot, of Jacob, of Esau, kept alive in the minds of people the memory of their ancient migrations. These legends had also a moral significance. The great migration of Israel had been in times of spiritual illumination and prophetic power. Abraham and Moses, Jeremiah, the prophets of the captivity, and the sons of the Maccabees were “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” The religion of the people was in its essence not local. They were sons of Abraham

before they were citizens of Zion. The prophets who most fully expressed their national ideas had always said, "Though Jerusalem perish, though the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, yet none the less God is the shepherd of his people." In the religious poetry of the nation the figures of movement and progress, of flight and desert-journeyings, are common ones.

The spiritual Israel always worshipped, like Father Jacob "leaning on the top of his staff," ever ready to resume its march, pausing, but not arrested, in its onward course. Once a year the whole nation, staff in hand and with loins girded as for a journey, eat the hasty paschal meal, which solemnly consecrated the whole "peculiar people" as the holy wanderers of history.

In the light of these conceptions we are ready to see Christ's intent in this brief warning against the mysterious sin of Lot's wife,—a sin of which one element is recorded, that she "looked back." It was as if he had said: "A time of change and destruction is near: much that you hold dear and sacred is about to perish. Such changes have often come before, in our fathers' times. Remember that the true servant of God will set his face forward. They who cling to the old, will be unable to escape from the wrath that is to come."

This warning was needed. Jesus rightly interpreted the signs of the times, for a spiritual as well as a political crisis was at hand. They who would attach themselves to his cause must be held back by

no private or local ties. Spiritual religion must take on once more something of its ancient migratory habits. The disciples must go out into all the world. The old order was doomed.

As in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, an ancient civilization was being destroyed in its sins; and in the hands of a faithful few, who escaped its evil tendencies, the promise of the future lay. No time now for regretful conservatism and sentimental tarrying! The servants of the living God were called to go forward, and no man who should put his hand to the plough and look back was fit for the kingdom of God.

Did time permit, we would gladly consider the large problem of what should be the true adjustment in the religious life between tradition and living principles, between the faith our fathers taught and that by which our children shall be guided. I beg you to notice how, in the very language of my text, the most radical utterances of Christ's new gospel were illustrated by examples which appealed to a holy past. In proclaiming a new righteousness greater than that of Moses, a new wisdom better than Solomon's, he allied Himself with the eternal spirit which runs through all the ages, which existed before Abraham was, and shall endure when Scriptures and temple have passed away. Perhaps our distinction between the conservative and the iconoclast will similarly pass away in the religion of the future. The spiritually enlightened man can employ the past and the present as mutually explanatory. He accepts the moral of every aged fable. He feels the glowing

heart of faith under the cumbrous apparel of myth and creed. He can say to such superstitious idolaters of the ancient tradition, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

But it is not to so large and impersonal a theme that I direct your thoughts. On this last Sunday of the year we may remember the sin of Lot's wife, as illustrating not a principle in the Church at large, but a danger in our own lives. Perhaps the smaller theme is the true key to the larger. The end of the year is naturally our season of remembrance. One truth stands out at this time singularly plain,—that each man's memories are exclusively his own. We gather together in such an assembly as this, in recognition of needs, desires, and prayers which belong to our common humanity, and of one divine life which surrounds and sustains us all. Yet I seem to see each one of you attended by lights and shadows from your separated past, each one entrenched, as in a fortress, among the unshared memories and the by-gone experiences which are inalienably your own. By the fate of Lot's wife—as interpreted by Jesus—we are reminded that there is a backward look which is fatal to progress and to light. This one sinful act of Lot's wife emerges out of the dreamland of that prehistoric day, and its spiritual quality stands out as a warning against the same sin in every generation.

It may seem strange that in such an irresponsible and almost mechanical faculty as memory there should be moral danger. But, if you look below the surface, you see that memory is no automatic recorder, no

photographic plate impartially registering every object presented. Every year and every day a thousand experiences are forgotten. Life and time are as a sea from whose flowing tides certain objects are cast upon the shores of memory and preserved: others, sinking in shoreless depths, are lost in oblivion. "How strange that I forget," you say; but no, the strange thing is that you remember!

It is the seal and witness of your individual being. Far from being a passive faculty, memory moves according to the deepest activities of the soul, not as yielding wax receiving impressions upon it, but as a most active power. The things men remember are such as become constructive forces in character. The scholar never forgets the great books which shaped the belief or fired the enthusiasm of his youth. No one of you ever forgets the persons who have touched your heart, who have influenced your character and shaped your opinions. Hence the recollections of childhood are so vivid. For in that plastic time a word spoken in jest, a chance companionship, may become the source of the most momentous tendencies in after life. Many of the eccentricities of memory are explained by the fact that in this spiritual treasure-house events are ranked in the order of their moral significance. The man who will remember every trifle in connection with his business — *i.e.*, of his main duty in life — will forget entirely the last book he read. The jeweller remembers everybody's diamonds, the statistician has a brain filled with figures, and the minister has ever a text on the end of

his tongue. The retentiveness of memory corresponds with the sphere of one's interest, and enlarges as that does. Hence it is that to forget a duty only adds to the disgrace of not performing it; while to forget an injury proves a truly benevolent mind. Whatever stirs the conscience is remembered. When the soul and heart are quickened, then the passing event becomes indelible.

The record of the life of Jesus is full of such incidents. Hence it is so fragmentary, hence so impressive. Great gaps are left in the story. Events that would fill chapters of an ordinary history are passed over in silence. But the smallest fact is recorded, if it chance to strike deep root in some listening and watchful soul. How touching is that solemn record of this outwardly insignificant event!—"The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." That brief glance of sorrow rescued an apostle from a traitor's final shame. No doubt Peter himself contributed this to the Gospel, as a great and necessary fact in any true record of his Master's life.

Does not your own memory hold among its treasures or its terrors some brief look or word, some trifle light as air, which has a place in the "sacred history of the soul"? Our memories are gloriously moral, and have no regard for dignities. An idle word which wounded a friend, may be written larger there, than all the distinguished efforts of an eloquent pen. The man of the world forgets easily the many brilliant assemblies he has adorned, and the long round of elegant pleasures in which he has participated; but how

vivid the reminiscence of some unknown and private day, when honor received a wound, or some disgraceful temptation was finally embraced! People in whom there is no principle of progress have memories like those ancient and deserted lands, where all the king's palaces are in ruins, and only the sepulchres are preserved. The shapes of memory are spun from the same thread of which the tissue of character is woven. There are no accidents here. Like drifts to like. And, as the soul moves through life, such thoughts and memories as are of its own kind are attached to it and become as part of its substance. It is a personal matter. As a man remembereth, so is he. Our backward look upon the past — like that of Lot's wife — is no accident of the moment, but the outcome of our character.

In the light of this spiritual law, that what we remember depends upon what we are, we see that the season of remembrance is also our day of judgment; that the faculty of memory is the angel of judgment in our hearts. The past is inseparable from the present experience and in the backward look we become conscious of our moral identity, sometimes with a vividness which the passing experience itself never gives. Hence the danger and the service of the day of remembrance.

This old year that now lies behind us may be a chain to bind, or an inspiration to urge us on. Let us try to distinguish between the good and evil in this matter. First, there is the "dead past." There are those experiences in our lives which never had in

them any principle of permanence or growth. Do not struggle to carry with you the burden of a dead past, — its trifles, follies, wasted hours, mistaken purposes, and fruitless pleasures. Who has not looked back, like Lot's wife, upon such scenes of destruction? Who has not missed the onward path in such vain lingering looks upon things that ought to have perished?

But, besides a dead past, there is that sinful past which brings death with it. Can you look back upon your life, without seeing some records there that flash with warning or flow with humiliation and tears? It is here that the dead past weighs heavier than a mill-stone round the necks of those unhappy ones who try to bear it with them through the painful years. It must not be attempted. "Let the dead past bury its dead." Remember, by all means, your sinfulness, but forget the sinful deed. Treasure the warning, but beware how you review in fancy the painful scenes by which your conscience was instructed. The evil of the confessional, and of much morbid self-reproach, is that it dwells too much with the gross accident and transitory form of the sin, not enough in the needs of the soul which the sin reveals. Fly from the burning Sodom of by-gone sin. Rejoice that you have left it burning behind you, but do not look at it. Turn your face toward the promised land, and recognize God's mercy in your escape. Of all sins known to man there is only one mortal, and that is the clinging to an evil past. The heritage of Mother Eve (she who, half-beguiling, half-beguiled, first placed on

human lips the mortal taste of disobedience) may be forgiven and made clean. To disobey because evil was tempting and deceitful, that was terrible, indeed; but to keep on sinning when the illusion has departed and the serpent glitters no longer, to turn once more to what is seen to be perishable, to refuse to go on when the Heavenly Voice has called us forward,— what sinning so terrible as that? There is a feeble spirit in us all, which clings to a lower life because it is easier and accustomed, which disobeys not from passion or ignorance, but from mere lack of faith in God's promised land before us. Let that spirit remember Lot's wife, for it is a partner of her sin. That pillar of salt is, indeed, as the Book of Wisdom says, "The monument of an unbelieving soul."

But above all this there is a living past, too. It contained those events and deeds in which the living principles were shown by which, now and always, we would be guided. "Forgetting the things behind" is by no means the last word of the religious ideal. Our life is a progress: we need the memories of the past to show the lines of direction in which we should go. On the day of remembrance we should try to see the sweep of the curve on which our lives are moving. God was in that past of yours. He was in it; and therefore it has a meaning and value for your spiritual nurture. The lives of many of you are fragmentary. The old years and the new have no bond between them. Like Lot's wife, you know not how to bind the fresh experience with what has gone before. Your past and present are in conflict: your backward look is at

the expense of present power; and so there is no unity, no continuity, in your life. There is such fragmentariness about every life, to a degree. Try to see your past not as dead, but as the material from which the "living present" is to grow. Things of the old year, in which you saw no significance at the time, were training you for the New Year's chosen task. The dreadful mistake was God's warning beacon which is to guide you now. The blinding sorrow was leading you to the deeper secrets of love, and the holier light of faith, in which you stand to-day. The day when you woke from delusion, and perceived the larger truth and blessing that was near,— its memory remains a witness in your heart of the possibilities of heavenly renewal.

The sin of Lot's wife was not in memory as such, but in letting the thought of things gone by, stop the onward course to better things. In one sense it is not possible or desirable to forget anything, be it good or evil, that deeply influenced your character. The records of the past are part of our personal identity. We are not permitted to forget anything until we have learned the lesson it had to give. The service of the past is to be an inspiration to the present. Such has always been the religious method of employing the memories of the soul. In some form or other it uses confession as a prelude to peace. "Whoso confesseth and believeth, the same shall be saved." Religion always joins the memories of the past, however sad or shameful, with the highest faith in the renewing power of the spirit. Paul never forgets that

he was a persecutor of Jesus. Peter's memory of his denial adds to his fiery zeal a solemn and steadfast gratitude, which holds him to his apostolic mission with a constancy foreign to his nature. Should you suggest to one of these self-recording souls that perhaps it was not to blame for that old mistake, it would look at you, not with gratitude, but with grieved protestation. The old evil life is the distant land-mark, from which the progress of the soul's journey is estimated. Take away its ownership in that past, and the soul loses its bearings and cannot tell whence it came or whither it goes. The instinct of sorrow for the past, the profound sense of guilt which all men know at times, is a recognition of the profound fact that a law of cause and effect operates inevitably in character. We read in the sins of yesterday something of our sinning capacity for to-day, and should strive not to obliterate this sense of guilt, but convert it into a spiritually propelling power. Hence Christ's method of removing from a tempted soul the poison of its past, is to put into a man a new principle of spiritual growth, that the old encumbrances shall fall from him, as in spring-time the dead oak-leaves are thrust from the branches where they cling, by the outward expansion of life and beauty within. Christ imparts to sinful men the knowledge of a new love and better order of life, which conquers the evil inclinations and habits; and he who has once tasted of this victory may go on conquering and to conquer. For him to whom the prayer "Deliver us from evil" has been once answered, the

memory of evil has lost its terror. He who has learned the love of goodness can say to the returning violence of his old temptations, "It is no longer I, but sin that dwelleth in me."

The day of remembrance, then, should bring with it two signal benefits. It reveals the past as a constructive power in character, as a spiritually propelling force; and it gives unity to our unstable, ever-changing lives.

But there is another helpful illustration in the figure of Lot's wife. Her companions were from the same city as she, but the same memory which urged them onward, held her fatally back. Are there not these two classes of people among ourselves? Are there not these conflicting tendencies in our hearts? Do we not find that, viewed in the religious spirit, our experience is a treasury of living principles, which are ever with us? Is there not also a misuse of memory which clings to the mere forms in which the spirit flows, and sees not that the same beneficent power which was in the vanished joy,

"Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind."

Our past must be left behind us as a form, taken with us as a principle. How many souls are paralyzed by the backward look! How many to whom every lesson that life brings, every mistake, every blessing, every loss, is a new source of power; and who draw from the deep wells of their experience the water of life for many!

As we stand here between the old year and the new, let us resolve to carry forward all that is strong and vital. May the day of remembrance be to us all, not the looking back of Lot's wife, a time of unavailing dejection and of spiritual danger, but a restful pause, in which the pilgrim may trim his lamp and gird his loins anew! The ceaseless rush of passing opportunity, each day bringing its own claims and cares, would dissolve our lives into a flood of changing dreams. We should be creatures of circumstance, did we not sometimes collect our scattered experiences and "gather up the fragments that remain." Your experiences as they pass are often too passionately exciting to reveal their meaning and reality. Only when they have been viewed from a distance, in the silent landscape of the past, do they show their true harmony and outline. A great sorrow, when it descends upon our heads, is too near to be known. It is the cloud which has come too near the earth, and simply chills and darkens, with its blinding mist, the house on which it rests. But, by and by, the cloud of sorrow lifts, into the calm atmosphere of the past, and then sends down a fruit-giving rain upon some dry and thirsty ground; or reflects upon us, it may be, the light of heaven in nobler and more varied colors than the cloudless sky could show. In God's sight the old year needs a new to make it perfect. And only in the light of the old year shall we see our way through what the new one has in store. As we are made mindful of the changes of the time, let us hold fast to the eternal things. May the Father in his

love, enriching, fructifying every experience, lead us into the large life with Him, which is an eternal one! The perishable shapes in which the web of life is woven, these, after all, are not the reality of our lives. The ever-succeeding days and years are as the strokes of time's great bell calling us to prayers of thanksgiving. May every experience be a new door into the temple of God, through which we enter the divine fulness of grace! May the past grow rich with meaning and inspiration, and the future bright with hope and glory, until the old heaven and earth shall pass away, and God shall be all in all!

THE SILENT HOUR.

AS the storm retreating
Leaves the vales in peace,
Let the world's vain noises
O'er our spirits cease.

Sounds of wrath and striving,
Man with man at war,
Hearts with Heaven contending,
Hear we now no more.

Now the hours of stillness
Wondrous visions show ;
Heaven unfolds before us,
Angels come and go.

Holy, human faces,
From earth's shadows free,
Look with love upon us,
Bid us patient be.

Almost we discern them,
Almost read their smile,
Almost hear them saying,
"Wait a little while."

Thus, in hours of stillness,
Faith to Heaven shall rise,
Till death's last, deep silence
Quite unseals our eyes.

SOME SOURCES OF THE NEW THEOLOGY.

“Can ye not discern the signs of the times?” — MATT. xvi. 3.

THE Christian Church to-day has two vast problems before it. One is practical; how to realize the kingdom of heaven among men. The other is a question of doctrinal interpretation; a question as to how far the teachings of the past are worthy of our acceptance, and how far we are possessed of larger truth than any the past has known.

I know many people think doctrinal questions of little importance compared with practical ones. They are willing to stop thinking, if only they are encouraged to go on doing; but the famous remark of Mazzini, the great Italian patriot and thinker, is as true for America as for Italy, that the political question is the social question, and the social question is at bottom the religious question.

Let us therefore bear in mind that underneath the practical problems of the Christian world, lies the no less mighty and important problem of what religion is, how it is to be interpreted, and how its sublime hopes and motives are to be made real and persuasive.

I wish to consider in this sermon some of the

changes which have affected religious thought, with the purpose of discovering what our duty is toward the ideas of the past, and what hope we may have for the future of religion among men.

Notice, in the first place, that change is as much the law of religious thought, as of any other activity of the human mind. Religions, like races, grow old and perish. The Bible itself records at least four different kinds of religion which have succeeded one another in the history of a single nation. The old Hebrew polytheism was succeeded by the sublime faith of the prophets in the righteous Jehovah as the only true God. That prophetic faith was succeeded by the priestly religion, with a temple service; which in its turn was superseded by Christianity. Christianity itself has been subjected to a perpetual law of development.

Such being the case, we might almost say that in matters not of religious experience, not of the facts of spiritual life, but of religious doctrine, opinion, and creed, the presumption was against old forms and in favor of the new. The chief argument of Orthodoxy, not only Christian Orthodoxy, but of the conservative party in other religions, is its claim to antiquity. "It is written," "It was said by them of old time,"—these are the sacred phrases by which questionable opinions are supported. But what has antiquity to do with truth? The more we consider the matter, the more evident it is that antiquity had no privilege of arriving at complete truth in religion, more than in other matters. The prophets of the past transmit

to us a glorious heritage of enthusiasm, but their enthusiasm is not more likely than ours to be exempt from error and delusion.

But, not to go back too far, consider some of the changes which have passed over human thought in the last four hundred years, and see how profoundly they must shape the formation of religious thought.

It has been said that the awakening of the human mind which began in the fifteenth century in Italy, the movement which is called the Renaissance, consisted of two achievements, the "discovery of the world" and the "discovery of Man."

By the "discovery of the world" we mean Man's scientific acquaintance with the universe. The achievement of Columbus may be regarded as a single illustration of a process of discovery still continuing. Other men have claimed the discovery of this continent; but Columbus is the true hero, because he was the first to discover the New World scientifically. I need not state in detail what the discovery of the world has accomplished, for that would be to describe the whole stupendous structure of modern science. And with the "discovery," there has proceeded at the same time Man's mastery of the world. To describe this, would be the story of all modern invention, of continents populated, oceans mapped, mountains made highways, and even the stars weighed in a balance, made to tell the story of their birth, and proved of one substance with our own terrestrial dust.

All this has necessarily affected our conceptions of religion. Even had no other intellectual revolution

taken place, the work of modern science alone would be sufficient to fix a gulf between ourselves and the mediæval theology which can never be recrossed.

But no less wonderful than the discovery of the world has been what is well termed the "discovery of Man." By this is meant the new sense of the worth, beauty, and gladness of human life, which separates us from the mood of the Middle Ages. The inhabitant of those gloomy monasteries and castles, in the ruins of which the modern tourist takes his holiday, was as ignorant of art, of literature and history, as he was of natural science; but the characteristic mark of the transition to modern times, is that to us human life, as such, has become interesting. The painters of Italy ceased to draw impossible angels and celestial virgins, and filled the churches with their wondering, delighted studies of human faces and human forms, dressed in the costumes of their own time and lighted with varying expressions of human feeling.

In literature, Shakspeare invests purely human action and human passion with all the characteristics of the sublime; and in the centuries succeeding him, the drama and the novel facilitate our observation of human life, as much as the telescope does of the stars.

Together with this revival of modern art and literature — which sprang from the rediscovery of the half-forgotten world of Greece, of Rome — there came into being a new art of music, with its soul-searching power and intensely personal quality.

Moreover, this imaginative interest in human nature, which the fine arts embody, is supplemented by what may be called the scientific study of Man, in history and philosophy. History is a science yet in its infancy. So far has it proceeded, however, that in our own day we really have a truer knowledge of the history of the Romans than the Romans themselves. We know the history of Israel better than the Hebrews knew it. The archæologist unearths the buried past, and almost makes it live and move before our eyes. Egypt and Assyria come out of their solemn tombs, dressed in the gayest colors. Their dead alphabets give the chronicle of their barbaric kings; and, as we read them, we feel probably a more lively interest in the story than did the trembling slaves who carved it in stone, or the priests who made those tombs their altars, and added to the terrors of those cruel monarchies, the terrors of the supernatural.

This reconstruction of history is but one outgrowth of the larger fact that the energy of modern thought has been directed toward everything human. Another branch from the same root is philosophy, as the moderns have treated it. Modern philosophy is Man investigating his own nature. The three great questions, as Kant puts them, are, "What can I know?" "What ought I to do?" "What may I hope for?" See how human these problems are,—not, What are the divine attributes? What is the first principle of nature? but the much nearer, yet no less profound question as to the powers and credentials of our own

souls. Every intellectual nation in Europe has produced its school of thinkers on these fundamental questions of life. Under mountains of verbiage and technicalities which repel all but the professional scholar, it is evident that all theological disputes must come back to these pointed inquiries. You offer me divine truth. Tell me, first, how I know even simple things, what knowledge is, and how to tell a reality from a dream. You lay commandments on my will: then show me the sense of duty within me. You speak of heaven and eternity: then show what is in me now, which is capable of everlasting life. Thus it is that the minds which seek to look below the surface of truth, and who once would have been reading Augustine and the creeds, are now busied with psychology or logic or ethics; for the thought on spiritual things has been turned earthward and manward.

The hastiest survey of these revolutions in the world of thought, forces us to inquire how far these changes are interwoven with the religious ideas and religious life of our time.

The effect of the scientific movement has been so frequently discussed that, though it is most important, it may be briefly described. It has penetrated religious thought with its vast conceptions of the universality of law, the unity of all energy, the evolution of all forms, and has accomplished the delocalizing of deity. Under the conception of law, the old apparatus of miracle, of special creation and supernatural interference — by which a God outside of be-

cause he is above Nature, condescends to mend and retouch his world — is gone forever. Extraordinary events recorded in the Bible, especially those connected with the Founder of Christianity, if accepted as true, are no longer a help to faith, but an after-admission, and, when accepted by enlightened minds, are merely evidences of some law of Nature yet undiscovered. Hence the emphasis of modern Christianity is no longer upon what is exceptional, but upon the universal element of its gospel.

This conception of law, with its abolition of miracle, has radically affected the conception of prayer. Prayer is no longer expected to call down rain from heaven, stop the pestilence in its course, or modify, through any non-human agency, the operations of natural causes. It has become a purely spiritual act, taking place in the sphere of human freedom, and by laws on the spiritual and personal plane opening the human spirit to the divine, and refreshing conscience and love at their fountain-head in God. Prayer is no claim for something arbitrary. It is a renunciation of the lawless assertion of self-will, and a merging of the heart with the Supreme Good. Prayer is but the recognition of the supreme and final law of the universe as justice and love. For what is law in the physical becomes holiness and righteousness in the spiritual.

No less has the scientific conception of the unity and correlation of forces, modified the religious conception of divine government. It is no longer possible to regard any force or process in nature as common or

unclean. If part of nature is under a curse, then all is so. If the lightning and the storm are of the wrath of God, so also are the useful electric spark, and the trade-wind that blows the merchantman across the tropic. If drought and deluge are of the evil power, so, also, are all the laws of meteorology from which these phenomena proceed. Hence we have gained through the study of nature an immense respect for matter and all its doings. The old fancy of a divided world — God absent here, present there; here earth, there heaven; here nature, there grace — is no longer rational. There is evil, yes: but no order or kingdom of evil. Hence in morals, the ideal of asceticism yields to the higher ideal of education. Retribution becomes a search for a remedy. There is "no more curse," no more amputation and barbaric surgery, but the healing of disease by the entering in of more abundant life. This unity of things, which science sees on the physical plane only, becomes in the religious vision the permeability of all matter by spirit, and of each fragmentary soul by the universal and redeeming life of God, which is "in all and through us all."

The doctrine of evolution is a yet more potent solvent of the old theologies. It reduces to pure allegory the story of the Fall of Man; and, when applied to history and sacred literature, reveals the law of continuity in religions as well as in other forms of life. It shows that the faiths of the ages did not descend full formed from heaven, but came gradually into being; each generation transmitting to the next some

beams of heavenly light, and all moving together toward clearer vision and deeper trust. This thought of evolution, when applied to religion, quite pulverizes the orthodox hypothesis of any perfect and complete body of teaching given to mankind once for all and never to be corrected or improved. It shows that in all Bibles, churches, and creeds, eternal truth has always been imparted through transient mists of human error. Infallibility is impossible; and changelessness is but another word for death.

Yet by this vast generalization, religion has gained far more than it has lost. It has gained infinite sympathy and tolerance toward all the gropings after truth—all superstitions and idolatries even—which mark the various stages of the religious history of man. The scientific and comparative study of religions, the achievement of this century alone, has added immensely to our power of discriminating between what is essential, and what not, in the varying forms of religion among men. It shows the universality and also the living, developing character of the religious idea. It establishes the religious sentiment on far deeper grounds than the legends of Orthodoxy, and gives it permanent place in human nature.

Moreover, the conception of a growing world, of creation not by impatient leaps, but by the orderly, inevitable unfolding of the divine thought, plants our interpretation of Nature upon an inextinguishable hope. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." New light is shed upon the ancient and tangled problems about the conflict between the evil and the good.

Mr. Spencer does not hesitate to speak of the "evanescence of evil." Professor Fiske elaborates the same fruitful thought. If science can teach religion to regard evil as a transient process in the creation of good, how great will be the gain to a reasonable faith! Indeed, to some conception of evolution, religious men have always betaken themselves in justifying the ways of God to man. The thought of a yet unfinished world, of a "creation groaning and travailing together," has always had its place in religious thought. Always we were "saved by hope."

Another important effect of science upon theology, is what may be called the delocalization of deity. The old Christianity had a picturesque conception of all divine things. The heavens of Dante admit of topographical arrangement. To the imagination of the Middle Ages, the throne of God occupied a definite place among the celestial spheres. Heaven above and hell beneath, were regions as definitely conceived as land and ocean, or earth and air. Science has forever obliterated these ancient pictures. The earth is no longer the centre of the universe, nor a peculiar seat of divine activity. Astronomy has abolished the old heaven of celestial courts and choirs; and geology has closed the doors of the ancient hell,—which was believed to lie below the ground, and from which lost spirits, like Mephistopheles, rose by night in sulphurous wickedness to tempt and ruin doubting souls.

So one by one the old pictures, which were such helps to faith, have faded; but it is only to give free career

to a far grander and more spiritual conception of the divine than was possible before. Instead of a monarch in distant space, connected with ourselves by a series of mediators and secondary causes, we have an ever-present Father, who is the life of our life. God in the world is the World-Soul; the eternal in time; in human nature, the source of the love, power and peace, which the world can neither give nor take away. To look up to a celestial sovereign is far less satisfying to religious aspiration than to rest continually in the embrace of divine goodness, and to know one's little life a channel of the infinite life which fills the suns and stars, which breaks into beauty with the flowers, and guides our human freedom and unrest into the safe refuge of truth and right and love. The new faith is not so clearly outlined as the old; but it is far more satisfying to the religious feeling, and more closely allied with righteous living.

But pass now to the effect upon religion of what was called the "discovery of Man." Consider the softening of cruel dogmas, which must come with the development of sympathy and imagination! Modern Christianity has learned that the voyage of human life on earth is something more than a passage perilous to eternity. Life is something more than probation, more than preparation. Life itself, here on earth, in this human body, is good, and may be made better. Art, knowledge, power, health, virtue,—these are all good; and would be good if there were no Heaven to follow. Not only are these grand things of our earthly life worthy of our passionate pursuit,

but also the common daily joys are honorable. It is good to dance and sing, to have merry hearts, to feel the sunlight and the pleasant air. It is good to say with Nature in her joy of springtime and youth,—

“My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss I feel,— I feel it all.”

This rightfulness of healthy joy is what the painters and the poets teach us. It gives the sympathetic delight in Nature and in Man which the sanctity of the Puritans forgot. Entering into religion, it makes men desire not so much a world to come, as a fuller possession of the present opportunity; an opening of each soul to more of present life and present joy; a lifting of all mankind together into better, happier, more abundant, but still terrestrial life. Such, I think, is the religious effect of the total modern development of what we call “the humanities.” It bases the hope of heaven, not on the poverty, but on the richness and promise of our earthly existence.

But let it not be thought the “discovery of Man” has only given a more cheerful view of life, a new lightness of heart. The new thought is as serious and profound as the old. The science of history, with weighty argument and industrious research, can trace the rise and decay of nations. But, while such research shatters the fables of the priests, it points the moral of its story far more impressively than the legend could do. It records the steady triumph of the higher humanity over the lower. It shows how suc-

cess follows any form of civilization only as it rests on justice and virtue; because the powers which make and maintain nations are ideas, virtues, and the degree of brotherhood which the national ideal permits men to attain. We need no legend of supernatural pestilence or fire from heaven to prove that the only strength of the nation is in righteousness. All history becomes moral and prophetic. It is the world's Bible, full of warning, judgment, and hope.

Still more does the "discovery of Man," which is the achievement of philosophy, affect religious thought. The study of the laws of thought, of the mystery of the soul and conscience,—this profound and systematic self-knowledge after which the philosophers strive,—does it not show that the crowning miracle of the world is not above the heavens, nor in the deep, but simply in our human lives? In this power to think and know, in the sentiment of duty and the exaltation of a loving heart, we are in daily participation of a wonder, a miracle, a mystery, compared to which all "fables of the Alcoran or the Talmud" are trifles. To any thinking man, his power to say, "I live, I reason, I love the right and hate the wrong, I receive life from God," is a fact so unfathomable, that he need conjure no creed or theologian to invent mysteries of faith, lest God's world should not seem sufficiently wonderful.

For my part, I want no better evidence that the divine mind exists, than the response of the world to my human reason, than the harmony of my tiny faculties with the law of life and truth, which sustains the

stars in such a manner that gravitation swings by rhythms which I understand. That my eye, mind, and heart are so much at home in this universe of ours, is to me sufficient proof that, since the same Power made the world and me; made light and made the eye; produced the universal order and also the reasoning mind that calls it so: this all-embracing Creator includes intelligence in his being. The human soul, and the so-called material order, are parts of one spiritual organism, proceed from one source, from God.

The conclusion of religious philosophy seems to be that man's reasonable and spiritual nature both share the divine reason and the universal spirit; and that the finite is vouched for by the infinite. We trust our finite reason because God is reasonable; and we honor the moral sentiment, because it reveals an Eternal and Divine Will as authority over ours.

I have said all this, perhaps too little clearly, because we often forget that the so-called "liberal theology" is not the product or the opinion of solitary thinkers, but the slow outgrowth of the whole intellectual life of Europe for the past four centuries. Every denial, every affirmation, is allied with some assured result of the many-sided intellectual life of our time. Science, history, philosophy, art, literature, and political thought, are elements in that new interpretation of religion, which is rising into consciousness among thoughtful minds in the churches of to-day. Religion is to live no longer in a cloister, but in open communication with all the thoughts of men.

Let us be grateful that we live in such a time of fruitful harvesting, when men are binding up the sheaves of truth from many fields, and casting the chaff away. It is a great privilege to live when new light and higher faith are being won, when the power of religion is deepening, broadening as it is to-day, and the claims of the intellect are meeting the claims of the heart. But it is only a privilege to those whose minds are open to more truth, and who with the coming of the new light are faithful to the old light as well.

Let us in our thinking as well as in our living, be faithful; and, while we get light from many windows, let us remember from whom all truth is given, and that all these divided beams come down to us from the Central Mind, and are to lead us in adoring vision to God himself,—who is the “Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

AS A LITTLE CHILD.

FAITH is no miracle. She does not come
An alien angel to man's awe-struck home,
And bid all sweet, familiar talk be dumb.
This heavenly visitant was ever near,
Stood by thy cradle, calmed each childish fear,
And clasped thee helpless with embraces dear.
If now thou feel'st that round thy life must be
Truth, justice, love, beyond what thou canst see,
'Tis Faith, thy soul's first friend, reclaiming thee.

THE LIBERAL FAITH TO-DAY.

“Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”—2 COR. iii. 17.

THE great affirmations of the liberal faith to-day are not heard in one denomination alone. They cannot be wholly excluded from any religion of thinking men. In many minds they stand vague and unuttered, side by side with much that is inconsistent with them. But the old theology is on the defensive. It produces no longer the living faith that animated Crusader or Puritan. It has become to its cheerful adherents a piece of conventionality. Yet, widespread as the liberal faith may be, it exists, in all but the few avowedly liberal churches, not as the substance and inspiration of all faith, but in the form of a mild concession. For nearly one hundred years Unitarianism in Massachusetts lay in people's minds as a speculation before it became a positive faith. So it lies to-day in the great body of churches. Some fear it may possibly be true. Others admit that it may be so believed as to do no harm. Only in the few liberal churches have people come to see that the doctrines of the liberal faith are not only unanswerable and harmless, but that they are a positive enlargement and invigoration of the religious life; and

not only consistent with Christianity, but the essence and power of Christianity; not only innocent, but necessary to the advancement of religion, and the higher life of mankind. We may distinguish three stages of progress in the history of Unitarian ideas: first, when, as by the predecessors of Unitarianism one hundred years ago, and by many people to-day, they are privately admitted, but concealed for fear of doing harm; second, when they are felt to be true, and honestly and openly maintained, but it is supposed that they are necessary only to the enlightened few. Finally, the conviction arises that the liberal faith is a positive good, that it is the essence of Christianity, and that whatsoever is not of the liberal faith does more harm than good.

Every great order of spiritual truth passes through these stages: it is admissible; then it is true; then it claims to be believed and taught to all mankind as a gospel. The liberal faith has several phases in regard to which it is not difficult to see that what seems at first an attitude of denial is really a deeper affirmation, not a mere protest against faiths of the past, but "a positive gospel demanding our loyalty."

Examine, first, the idea by which we are best known,—our faith in religious liberty. Just as the first declarations of our civil liberty seemed like a mere rebellion against kings, but were really a deeper and more affirmative view of the constitution of society, so the idea of religious liberty seems at first a negative idea. We will abolish the priesthood; we deny the authority of creeds; we will not even be-

lieve the Bible, as against the reason and conscience of the present age. This seems pure unfaith and denial. In its early stages and with superficial minds it often is so. But the truth is, that the ideal of religious liberty is a positive and constructive ideal. It means faith in the human mind, faith in the religious sentiment, faith in the final victory of truth.

Our American government has forever disestablished the Church. But to many people our practice of religious liberty is only a stern necessity. They prefer fair play to tyranny, but in their hearts they would like to dragonnade the whole human race into the temple of their own creed. They send their sons and daughters to strictly sectarian schools. If they could, they would suppress every form of religion but their own. They imagine in their hearts a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Roman Catholic world.

But to the liberal believer religious liberty is not a mere concession, but a grand and positive method of arriving at truth. It is not just a breaking down of bars, not a destruction of the things which imprisoned the human soul: it is ushering the captive into God's sunlight and air. Set the bird free, and he will sing the song that Heaven has taught him! Give liberty to the human soul and to every soul, and humanity shall utter nobler anthems of faith and love than ever the world has heard! This is a religious affirmation. It is trust in things unseen and eternal.

The truth is that the spirit of unfaith and denial is with the dogmatist, not with the liberal. "Take away my creed," he says, "set human nature outside

of my pleasant vineyard, the Church, and all souls will perish." Orthodox theology is pernicious because of the denials it contains. "Behold," it says, "the light of heaven through my stained glass, but not elsewhere! Behold your God upon my altar and in my book! but turn away from me, and God will abandon you forever." The Church says, "I am commissioned to teach and save." That is glorious. I believe her. But, when she says, "I am a school for a race of depraved imbeciles, for beings who without my word perish everlastingly," then she has too little faith. The Church is not a school for idiots, but a school for the children of divine wisdom, who without her can find a living Scripture written in the human heart, and an altar on every heap of stones. Such is the great affirmation of religious liberty: it affirms that human nature can be trusted, that the Spirit of Truth is come, and will guide us all into all truth. It is the faith that divine revelation is not something special and exceptional, but that the complete revelation is in the entire chorus of voices from every age and race,—yes, and from every human soul.

Therefore, every human soul has for its highest duty, not just to receive truth from without, but by its own inner pureness and sincerity to be one of the windows through which the truth of God shall come.

Secondly, because we believe that every human soul may have some light of life directly from God, therefore all souls need one another. We believe in the communion of the whole human race,—in other words, in the brotherhood of man. We are members

of one body. There can be no wall of separation between Christian and heathen, between the saved class and lost class; but, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. In the great gospel of Jesus and of Paul this truth is taught. But Christians have marred it. They have thought they could redeem a part of the world, and let the Devil take the rest. The Church calls itself catholic, or universal, but it is always drawing the line to excommunicate. The true Church studies only how to communicate, to recognize and make effective the inevitable brotherhood of man. And so the liberal faith says that no man can be saved alone, that no man is alone. We think that salvation comes, not by bargaining for one's own, but by entering freely into the life of all. No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself. No age, no nation, no church, can live to itself. The law of liberty is glorious; but higher and more glorious is the law of brotherhood, by which all are made partakers of a common life which is in all, and through us all, and over us all. The great life of Jesus reveals this unity of all men in God,—“They in me and I in thee, that all may be made perfect in one.” No break is possible in the spiritual bond. Even sin does not break it. It strains, but does not sever it. Loving hearts and true must bear the sins and sorrows of the world. The prodigal and wanderer is torn with yearnings for his Father's house. The weak ones and the blind ones are trying to get back, and the strong ones who have a vision are trying to lead them back. We of the liberal faith look upon the Chris-

tian life, not as a means of saving this soul and saving that soul, but as a realization of that brotherhood of all, which is salvation.

We carry over this brotherhood into the eternal world. There, also, the law of love will rule. If the people in heaven forget to go down into the outer darkness to lead the lower spirits upward, then heaven itself will become intolerable. This is the meaning of Christ's descent into hell. There, also, all spiritual beings will be partakers of one common life, which is the life of God. The aim and progress of eternity will be to increase and fulfil this participation, to realize in all, to shed abroad in all, the "fulness of God."

Thirdly, the liberal faith affirms the law of evolution in things spiritual. Applied to humanity, it affirms the education of the human race. In other words, it affirms that the past is never lost. Every age contributes its pulsation to the unfolding life of the Spirit. But the past is preparatory. No epoch is holier than the now, none yet so holy as the age to be. This law of spiritual evolution is expressed in the Old Testament by the prophecy of the Messiah, in the New by the expectation of the Second Coming. It is the folly of liberalism to suppose that up to the present time the human race has lived chiefly by delusion. We must cherish the illuminations of the past as the great oak-tree stores up in its heart the sturdy growth of its earliest years. Humanity without a past would be hollow at the heart.

But the Church exaggerates the past. Her ritual

is all a memorial and an epitaph. She uses her tradition, not to vivify and adorn the living word, but to silence it. The liberal faith would do justice both to the conservative and the progressive tendency. Because the changes of time are the manifestation of one continuous and uninterrupted life, therefore "nothing human ever dies." No faith in its essence can disappear; yet new and higher forms are to be expected forever. The new and the old are interpreters each of the other. The word of Christ is our simplest utterance of the highest truth, and yet the experience of centuries may read into the simple word an ever-increasing meaning. The old principles find applications on a grander scale. The hint becomes an assurance. The dawn of parable becomes the full noonday of unveiled and clearly outlined truth.

It follows naturally from what has been said that the liberal faith, believing in liberty, in brotherhood, and human progress, accepts in strict literalness the Christian prayer, "Thy will be done on earth." We want to make this world a better place. We count no religion worthy of the name which does not make it better. In this direction the whole Christian Church has been moving for several hundred years. But faith in the kingdom on earth has been something of a concession. Life was regarded as preparation and probation merely. The future in heaven was the principal thing; men said, "Let us give alms, and save our souls." It was admitted that a life of devotion to human welfare, the career of a philanthropist

or patriot, especially if seasoned with the right style of piety, might bring a man to eternal felicity. It was admitted, but not urged, as the only true and saving way. The liberal faith has changed that. We think earth comes before heaven, and it should be first in our thoughts. We would not have the pupil's thought forever fixed on graduation. Let him improve the opportunities of his school. So we put the chief emphasis of religion on this life, not upon the hereafter, believing that,

“If we do well here, we shall do well there.”

Thus far I have spoken only of man and of the things of man. But it was necessary to do so. For some such faith in man is the foundation of the liberal faith. For we believe that by this faith, first of all, we have a true idea of God. The two faiths cannot be separated. Without faith in God, the faith in man is baseless. Without the “enthusiasm of humanity,” religion becomes a tyrannical superstition.

And now, I come to what are the distinguishing faiths of Unitarianism, both as distinguished from Orthodoxy, and from the humanitarian liberalism that rejects Christianity.

We believe in revelation. When we think upon the deep things of man, they lead us into the deep things of God. We do not worship humanity. We cannot believe that the vast history of human progress is a mere refining of lower forces, an impossible transforming of matter into spirit, but rather the best life of the world has descended from on high.

In the law of liberty, of brotherhood, and the law of amelioration, we see the unfolding of a divine life, a divine purpose,—call it, if you will, *a progressive incarnation of God*. We do not pretend to explain man by the things that are in man. We cannot build our world out of cunning atoms, nor out of unspiritual and unguided forces. The things visible and temporal, proceed from things unseen and eternal. The natural is the offspring of the spiritual, the human of the divine.

The highest duty for man is not self-development, but the willing reception of the higher life, the higher wisdom and goodness, which is from the “Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness.” The whole life of humanity is but the unfolding and revealing of the life of God. The explanatory word for all creation and all history is “revelation.” Evolution is only a method. Revelation is the power, the purpose, and the meaning of which evolution is full.

So far the liberal faith, with this great affirmation, is in the line of all religion since worship first began. But hitherto all religions have affirmed revelation, not as the divine interpretation of the whole universe of life and power, but as something local, exceptional. They said, like Jacob, after dreams of heaven, “Lo, God is in this place, and I knew it not!” This local and limited faith is necessary for the childhood of the soul. But the shrine at Bethel, the memorial of the open vision, becomes at last the testimony that God is everywhere. The doors of heaven are on no transfigured mountain top, nor hidden in some secret cave,

but heaven and heavenly powers encircle all the globe. "Neither at Jerusalem nor at Gerizim shall men worship the Father." We affirm of the revealing Word that "without it was nothing made that is made."

No line, therefore, can be drawn, as the Church has done, between natural and revealed, profane and sacred. But, as in a holy temple not only the altar but the threshold is sacred, so in the creation where God is all in all, each power and element is holy in its own degree. It is never a question between God and no God, but between the partial revelation and the bright, unclouded glory. Where all is speech and symbol, we may cherish, above every other, the word or sign that is easiest read; but none the less we may revere the self-uttering spirit in all. In the book of God, which is creation, some pages to us are clearer, but all are written by one hand.

This truth of God as all in all, leads on to the affirmations of the liberal faith concerning evil and sin. There is no substance or power in existence which is essentially evil. Evil is good perverted or good in the making. Earthquake and eruption fashion the unfinished globe. The same combustion which bursts forth in conflagration and ruin is the common carrier and house-servant of us all. The same passions which devastate society with crime are the force and joy, the liberators and upbuilders, of the highest manhood. Such a faith in the non-substantiality of evil is not only the highest philosophy, but the joy and courage of every believing soul. It attacks every problem, grapples with every

situation. It casts out fear. It is never discouraged or impatient. It believes forevermore that the ideal is the only reality, that right is might, that the kingdom of heaven is always at hand.

One affirmation remains,—the relation of the liberal faith to Christianity. It holds to Christianity only as the broadest statement of spiritual truth. If there be any truth about God and the soul which Jesus has not touched, we would gladly welcome it. With us the authority of the Master is the authority of unmatched wisdom and love. If you do not see these in Christ, he is not yet the Christ to you. Though you should exalt him to the throne of God, he can have no other authority than his goodness and truth.

He cannot rule the world by celestial place or power, but by celestial qualities. His doctrine shall drop as the dew upon the tender grass.

To liberals, Christianity means the religion of Jesus, the spirit of his life, the mode of divine communion which his character stands for.

For myself I can say I have never known any truth concerning God which is not included in Jesus' prayers. I have never known anything about duty and love, which is not in his life. His authority is this,—that in him "the thoughts of many hearts are revealed."

There are some who feel a contradiction between the assertion of the authority and leadership of Jesus and the claim of liberty. I do not feel it. He calls us not servants, but friends. Whatever errors may have received the sanction of the Christian name, it

stands in the world to-day for all its Founder died for, — the highest aspirations for man, the purest love of God.

Who so ready as the liberal, to believe that a human soul has lived on earth who fulfilled the hope of righteousness that burns in every human heart, who had no will but God's, no desire but unselfish love, and could say because of such a holy character, "I and my Father are one"?

Finally, we believe in immortality, because we believe so much in God and in men. A soul that can commune with God, can never die. Our faith in the law of progress leads us to expect in another state of being a fulfilment of all that is imperfect in our earthly life. But the faith in immortality is not a leading motive in our conduct. We do not plan or speculate much concerning a future state. Whatever it may bring will be the orderly and wholesome development of what we now are. We do not believe it requires any special preparation to die. We do not think of heaven as strange and far-away. Heaven, as Jesus speaks of it, is always ready to open and send down upon consecrated heads the white wings of the Holy Ghost. We try to think of the life to come as a glorifying of what is best in this; namely, the fulfilment of love, the peaceable fruit of righteousness. There is no immortality worth having but an eternity of spiritual life, an eternity of goodness, of brotherhood, of divine communion. And so our path to heaven lies right through the holy places of this earthly life. We would look on death and the grave,

not with the horror a perverted Christianity teaches, but as the little child who feels that heaven and earth are not divided. In short, we believe in the life to come, because we so much feel the richness of this present life that the short earthly term seems inconsistent with its generous scheme.

Strange that liberalism, in so many minds, should be only a system of negations! True liberty is the spirit that affirms. We believe not less, but more,—more of God, more of Man. We trust the universe. We trust every faculty of the human soul. Our Bible has no end. We do not reject the prophets of the past. But we look for prophets yet to appear. We think the mysteries of God and Man have never any final expression. Our creeds are always open to amendment. We affirm that it is the very nature of the self-revealing God to make no pause in his education of the human soul, but ever to lead us onward into more satisfying knowledge of his Will.

THE LANDSCAPE.

A HUNDRED leagues of land and sea,
A boundless reach of sky,
Closed round the singing soul of me,
And woke this proud reply:

“I marvel what such vast expense
Of power is nourished by,
And how my microcosmic sense
Such height and depth can spy.

“Yet where my eyes the fragments scan,
Or view the glorious whole,
I find free harmony with man,
And truth which feeds his soul.

Not all your powers, earth, sky, and sea,
My watchful heart appall:
The same just laws guard you and me,
One life sustains us all.

CHRIST IN MODERN THOUGHT.

“What think ye of Christ?”—MATT. xxii. 42.

CRITICAL students of the New Testament have clearly shown that even within the limits of the sacred volume different views are given concerning the nature of Jesus. To the earlier group of disciples—to Matthew, to Peter, and to James—he is simply the Hebrew Messiah, the Son of David, and the Redeemer of Israel, attended by angel legions, about to seat his disciples upon judgment-thrones above the “nations,” and to fulfil all that the prophets have spoken.

To Paul he is the second Adam through whom not Israel alone, but the whole human race, are to enter into a new heritage of divine life, and, passing beyond the power of sin, to become the “Sons of God,” and “walk in the Spirit.”

In the Fourth Gospel we see an order of ideas, expressed in the language of Greek philosophy and almost without a trace of Hebrew imagery, in which Christ is represented as the divine Word, giving light to the world and life eternal to faithful souls. In this Gospel, as Dr. Carpenter has said, “the Jewish Messiah is divested of his robes of sovereignty; and

the writer has thrown round him the ethereal splendor of the Greek *logos*."

But all these varying conceptions have their origin in the life of Jesus and the impression which it made upon the world. The Jewish fishermen of Galilee, the learned doctor of Jerusalem, and the Greek disciple who gave to the Fourth Gospel its final form, each has before him the same facts,— the life of Jesus and the spiritual experience of Christian men; and each in his own way explains and rationalizes these facts, to bring them into harmony with his other ideas.

Such is the nature of all Christian doctrine: it is an attempt to bring intellectual order into the Christian mind.

It is therefore natural and inevitable that forms of doctrine should be modified or changed as human knowledge enlarges.

We live in a time when the expansion of human thought and discovery makes it necessary to readjust the intellectual conditions of Christian faith. Faith, indeed, may live on in many minds divorced from reason. The ideas of men on the subject of religion may stand apart from all other truth, and permit no thoroughfare between. But such a state of things cannot be permanent. A religion which ceases to think can have no authoritative place among mankind. For, unless reconciliation is achieved between the truths which immediately concern the soul and the truths which lie in the secular sphere, there must be on both sides a loss of seriousness. If religion is

true, it must be rational; and, if rational, it cannot contradict any truth elsewhere established.

How evident it is, then, that in any sincere statement of Christian truth we must depart widely from the language and the ideas of the past! If we still speak of Jesus as the Christ, it must be only in the purely spiritual sense of his moral and spiritual sovereignty. The drama of human history, as it lay in the Hebrew mind, began with the creation of the world, progressed through the fall of Adam, the calling of Abraham, the separation of Israel, and the giving of the law and the prophecies: it was to culminate in the advent of the Messiah, the glory and terror of the Judgment Day, and finally to cease in the New Jerusalem, wherein Christ and his elect shall reign forever in heaven. This dramatic conception of the spiritual progress of the human race, magnificent as it is, can no longer be accepted as literally true. It has exercised a solemn power over many generations: it inspired the genius of Dante and Michel Angelo and Milton; and the hymns of the Church still resound with phrases and ideas which come to us from this superseded cycle of thought. As poem, as drama, as symbol, its significance can never die; but as reality, as a view of the universe to be held by thinking men, it is an "unsubstantial fabric," and must certainly dissolve.

The same antiquated character belongs to much of the language of theology, even when clothed in the phrases of philosophy that are borrowed from the Greek. The metaphysical terms which once sought

to express the relation of the Father to the Son become daily more remote from the real thoughts of the Christian world.

The rank of Jesus in nature, his relation to God and to the human race, are subjects which need reconsideration and restatement. Let me ask you, then, to observe some of the tendencies of liberal theology in these regards.

If it be true that the history of the human race shows us no clearly marked beginning, but the gradual emergence of human powers, of thought, of morals, of religion from some dim background of an animal order; if it be true that there never was a fall of man, but rather that the entering consciousness of sin marks a higher level in the development of man's spiritual nature,—our whole view of sin, of redemption, and of the office of Jesus in the process of man's moral education, must be shaped accordingly. If we can no longer conceive of the scheme of Divine Providence and the inspiration of a diviner life as confined to one chosen race, but rather can see all over the world a reaching upward of the human soul to God, and that here and there in every land the voice of prophecy is heard, the qualities of love, wisdom, and holiness, shine forth in other true shepherds of the sheep,—we can no longer, in the light of this larger horizon, set Jesus upon an unapproachable pinnacle, and separate him by infinite degree from all the "elder brothers" in the family of man.

How, then, shall we make a statement of the place of Jesus in human history? Did he pay to the Al-

mighty the debt contracted by centuries of sin? Did he restore a ruined race, or bring down from heaven some bread of God men never knew till then? For these artificial and irrational conceptions we substitute a far grander. Jesus is simply perfect man,—man's moral nature consummated, and therefore thrown open to the life of God, therefore revealing that the goal and aim of all the wanderings and the sorrows of man, is to enter, by a life of brotherhood, of service, of self-devotion, into very fellowship with God, in conscious partaking of the joy and peace of the universal Spirit. Jesus, then, is the herald of the race to be, the bright and morning star. The heart of Christ is the deep heart of humanity itself; and he in his life and by his death is a pioneer in the higher life of the world. He shows us what man will be when the beast is eliminated and the human fully realized. He is altogether man, and therefore Son of God. He speaks to us in a holy and loving voice, from which every tone of passion or greed, every harsh note that comes to us from the scream of the ape and the cry of the tiger, have wholly died away. The sorrows which he bears are those which were laid upon him by the evil that is in the world. The agonies which so fiercely burn in a heart at war with its brothers or in rebellion against God were never experienced by the Son of Man. His sufferings are the sufferings of love. They have in themselves a healing balm, and end at last in fulness of joy, because they lift up the life to God.

How mistaken, then, to separate Christ from the

human race by surrounding him with miracle and dividing him by an abyss of metaphysical distinction from all other holiness the world has ever seen! Oh, no! The Man of Nazareth is one of us, and in the least of these our brethren, something of his divine nature abides. His place in history is that in him we see the goal toward which is tending man's age-long strife with nature and with himself. The varied discipline of man's life in the family and the nation, in the sacramental offerings of toil, heroism, and love, in the aspirations of worship and the unfolding of knowledge,—all this constitutes a providential education of our race, which is leading the human soul to God and making it God-like. Whosoever dwelleth in love dwelleth in him. Where there is the Christ-spirit,—the spirit of self-devotion, the spirit of faith toward God and of love unquenchable,—there is the Christ-nature, an Incarnation and a Christophany which is a part of the Divine Revelation upon earth. We see in much of the language of the New Testament this ideal doctrine of Christ as the fulfilment of humanity, the first-fruits of a process going on through the whole order of human history, the clear forth-shining of the light which lightens every man that cometh into the world, the herald of that age to be when the meek shall inherit the earth, and all the peacemakers be called the sons of God. This conception, which is implied in the theology of the Fourth Gospel and in the higher and freer portion of the reasonings of Paul, is one that requires for its support no distortion of history, no impugnment of

rational methods. The evidence for it is not, like the doctrine of the Trinity, hidden away in obscure scriptures or in the inaccessible counsels of God. It is a truth confirmed alike by witness of history and of conscience, and in conformity with the highest and dearest hopes that inspire a lover of humanity.

For, evidently, a fundamental question of religion is, "What is man?" Shall we search for the laws of our being, and find the key of our destiny, in the instincts of the brute and the irrational passions of the savage? Is our knowledge of human nature finished when the anthropologist or psychologist has analyzed for us all the lowest specimens of our fellow-creatures?

Or shall we interpret human nature by the Christ? Shall we see the heavenly image God would have us wear in the glorious face of him who is so greatly above our lowest nature that sinful men, like Peter himself, have bid him depart from them, and set him far away upon a throne in heaven?

The Christian faith is that the true man is the Christ-like man; that all else within us is passing away; that everything lower than Christ must yield at last to him, and be filled and perfected by his spirit.

With this view of the place of Christ in history, as the author and perfecter of our faith, the question arises whether it is any added glory to accord to him, as undoubtedly the Evangelists do, the possession of miraculous powers over the laws of nature. A being, born of a virgin, who could calm the storm and walk upon the sea, wake the dead by a word, and raise his

own body from the grave, must, it seems to me, be more than human. But the truth is that these miracles which most transcend human experience are those which even in the artless narratives recording them bear the least scrutiny, and are evidently the growth of wonder-loving legend around some original misunderstanding or some spiritual idea clothed in symbolic form. To those who identify Jesus with the second person of the Trinity, no doubt the claim of miracle is important; though I do not know why even God himself, having ordained the laws of nature beneficently, should suspend them in particular cases. To expect a miracle for the disciples in the Galilean tempest or for the weeping sisters in Bethany,—is it not to question the universal mercies of Him who exposes all other human beings to the vicissitudes of climate, and to the discipline of mortality and grief?

But to those who accept the true humanity of Christ the miracle brings an added difficulty. If Jesus is our example, we cannot imitate him where his powers transcend what is normally human. He evidently accepted all other limitations of our lot: should we honor him more if he refused to be bound by laws of chemistry and gravitation and the stern realities of life and death? Believe, if you can, that without the intervention of human toil he could create wine and bread by a sigh or a prayer, that he could restore the widow's son to a desolate home. Such powers do not show us what other pitying hearts may do in the presence of hunger or tears. It is the universal law of our human existence that the hungry can only be fed

by labor and forethought, and that the death of those we love must be accepted as the will of God. If the character of Christ was not formed under these conditions, his moral problem was different from ours, and his example could afford us no inspiration.

The reluctance which many people and which I myself feel in abandoning the idea of miracle arises especially from the fact that the "mighty works of Christ" so fitly symbolize the beneficent purposes of his mission among men. To heal the sick, to feed the hungry, to save our fellow-men in the hour of peril, and to comfort all that mourn,—yes, to make even a mountain remove and the laws of matter yield, rather than that a precious soul should suffer or sin,—how characteristic of the spirit of our faith!

Let us confess we do not acquiesce in all the evils under which human nature groans. We believe it is in the power of a higher manhood and the witness of the present kingdom of God, that it shall indeed subdue physical woes, and make the rude cruelty of nature's laws subservient to the desires of loving hearts. Such, I believe, is the sentiment which underlies the popular reverence for New Testament miracle. But the true supernatural is the eternal supremacy of the spiritual over the material, of man over nature, of faith and hope and love triumphing over the obstacles which surround our earthly life. These victories of the Spirit are not won by setting aside the laws of natural causation. With every will that is strong for righteousness and with every heart abounding with love and faith, a new and higher power does enter

into the ordering of human events; but this higher power does not act lawlessly, does not achieve results without adequate means. It triumphs over nature only by using nature, and cannot manifest the law of spirit except as the laws of matter are fulfilled in every jot and tittle.

If miracle, then, be understood to stand for spiritual victory, we do not lose what is vitalizing and significant in the New Testament by rejecting the miraculous narratives in their historic sense. The central fact still remains,—that the spirit of Christ “overcomes the world.” The sign of the kingdom is its power to cast out every evil thing.

Certain it is that the Christian of to-day, whatever his opinions concerning the Master whom he follows, expects to win his way, to save the souls of men, and to save their bodies, not by prayer without work, but by praying and working, too. Going out into the highways and strongholds of evil, armed with undaunted love and hopefulness, he nevertheless uses every aid of human science and human experience to accomplish his spiritual aim. Why should we suppose that the victories of the first disciples, or even of the Master himself, were otherwise?

Whether we say that the age of miracles is gone or that it never existed, let us keep the faith that mighty works are always possible. Whenever men follow Christ in his beneficence, whenever his disciples go about doing good, burning with devotion like his, with self-forgetfulness like his, and, as I believe, with a wisdom like his to employ fit means for reach-

ing his ends, they accomplish again and again great results for good, at which a cold and worldly mind gazes with wonder or with unbelief. May no keen analysis of science or criticism, no negations of liberalism, ever deprive us of that true miracle, the source of all others,—a faith that removes mountains, the enthusiasm that counts nothing impossible which is right, nothing impossible, though everything seem against it, if only God be for it!

This ideal of a victorious faith brings us to what is and must always be the central problem,—Where does faith in Christ become faith in God? Even an atheist may reverence the moral greatness of Jesus. As to his place in history and the power of his influence uplifting the world, there can be little question among thinking men. Then comes the question which is deeper than all,—not the old question, Is Christ of one substance with the Father? but simply this, Is the Christ-life God-like? is the highest human love and holiness a true symbol of the power that rules the universe? They heard a voice from heaven saying, “This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Was that a real message? I mean, Does the Universe guarantee Jesus? Is a life and soul like his an emanation from God,—not in the sense that every atom and star is part of the One in All,—but in the sense that the character of Christ is a true image of the divine character? Who does not see that this is the question of questions by which our belief in God must stand or fall?

Now, as we study the character of Christ,—and the

same thing is true whenever we touch the highest range of human goodness,— we find in him a profound consciousness that his goodness is derived. The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do. This is the essential quality of Christ's goodness,—that it is the revealing in him of a divine will, a divine love and holiness, to which his nature yields itself, and is quickened into ever greater fullness of life. As the anointing of the head of priest or king symbolized the descent upon him of divine gifts, so the very name *Christ* conveys this perpetual suggestion of the divine indwelling in the life of Jesus, the anointed of God.

Is this inner sense of life from on high his exceptional privilege? On the contrary, this consciousness of a derived and reflected goodness is the distinguishing quality of the Christian life.

The saintly minds that are formed to the pattern of the Man of Nazareth have neither the pride of self-dependent virtue, nor the unrest and strife of mere human struggle for a goodness ever unattained.

If, then, the highest human goodness, when giving an account of itself, is

“Lost in God, in Godhead found,”

this revelation confirms and even supersedes all other evidence that we can have of the goodness of God. The Old Testament word, “Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord,” and the word of Saint John, “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him,”—both of these attest that the

higher spiritual life in man is our partaking of a divine nature. It is this consciousness which distinguishes a merely secular virtue from a character formed by religion. It is this which raises Christ above the philosophers; because this perception of the dependence of our highest self upon the will of God is, with him, not an occasional inspiration, but the abiding and central reality of his life.

And so, wherever his name is spoken, there are humble lives which, by this secret of Jesus, become capable of moral greatness. Persuaded of this divine indwelling in man, you search after truth as for the thoughts of God written in his world. You may listen to conscience for the voice of the Eternal Right, and obey your inspiration to a life of loving self-gift to your brother man, knowing that this faint quickening of love in human hearts is the stirring within us of the love of God, which is over all, in all, and greater than all. To be a sharer in this universal communion, to eat of this bread coming down from heaven,—this is our true humanity, this is Christ in us, the hope and glory. How solemn the privilege! How wonderful the gift! Life is too short to reveal to us the full meaning of these unspeakable blessings. And the more we know of God through the revealing of his will in ours, the more we shall have of patience and of faith, of pure affections and heavenly hopes, and of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

MY FRIEND.

A FRIEND I had, who when his heart was cold,
Warmed it, he said, with life-enkindling wine,
Made from no mortal grape, but of a vine
Planted by Christ, and never waxing old.

This wondrous man, when wearily and slow
A comrade walked, would make his shoulders bare,
And whisper, "Brother, put thy burden there."
He walked, he said, with Christ, and rested so.

Then one black day I knew my friend must die.
I wept and strove. My heart was torn in twain.
But he! he smiled like heaven upon my pain,
And said, "Would God thou wert as blest as I!"

THE INCARNATION.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”—JOHN i. 14.

IN the celebration of Christmas there is something more than the celebration of a birthday. It is the birthday which stands for the most stupendous of all the Christian dogmas,—the *Incarnation*. That babe in the manger is believed by millions of our fellow-Christians to have been no less than the Infinite and Eternal God in human form. And this amazing event took place—for what purpose? Simply “for us men and for our salvation.” Through this miracle of the Incarnation—the source and parent of all other miracles—a divine life is imparted, a holy spirit is given to man. Though the joy and gladness which such a doctrine would naturally inspire, might, one would think, be sensibly diminished by the reflection of an orthodox believer that this infinite condescension of Almighty God has brought salvation to but the small minority of men, yet, happily, the Christian is not obliged to contemplate all the doctrines of his creed at one and the same time; and, therefore, this doctrine of the Incarnation is essentially a message of great joy.

I shall now offer you some reflections upon this

doctrine as seen from a Unitarian standpoint. For, though I reject this doctrine as commonly taught, yet I think it not only merits a respectful consideration, but that, sympathetically interpreted, it contains the very essence of Christianity, and is full of vital and practical consequences for us all.

Notice, in the first place, that one's acceptance of Jesus as the divine Man, in the fullest and most orthodox sense, has no necessary dependence upon the manner of his birth as related in two of the Gospels. When the apostle called his Master the Son of the living God, Jesus answered that this knowledge had not come to Peter from any human source. There was no knowledge among any of the persons surrounding Jesus that his birth had been in any way exceptional. They knew him only as the son of Joseph, and frequently asked for some clearer sign of his divine authority. Even his own brothers did not follow him at first; nor is there anywhere in the record of his ministry the slightest allusion to the legend of the nativity as we now have it. Nor do John and Paul (from whom proceeded the exalted views of Christ's nature, which were the germ of the Trinitarian doctrine) ever allude to it. If, therefore, the alleged miraculous birth was of no help in convincing the earliest Christians, it certainly will not much help us.

To us the doctrine of the Incarnation does not rest upon the legend. But, as I believe, the legend sprang out of the faith and came after it, so the faith may stand when the legend is rejected.

Let us try, then, to see how this doctrine originated, and what it means for us.

Its origin was in the impression of Divine Power made by the life of Jesus upon his followers. He spake as never man spake. Men greeted him as the Son of the living God. They ascribed to him the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, call down fire from heaven, and thought him worthy to sit at the right hand of God, and judge the world. Will you say that all this was ignorant fanaticism?

But see how various was this reverence paid to Jesus,—this sense of awe and wonder which he inspired. Mothers brought their children, that he might bless them. The people came to him with their sicknesses and troubles, pressing through the multitude and laying hold of his very garments, that they might touch this Messenger of God. See how the accusation of his enemies acknowledges the mystery of his nature. He is possessed of a demon, and not by any *common* fiend, but by the power of Beelzebub, the *Prince* and Emperor of them all. He has spoken blasphemy; he has made himself equal to God. See how the wretched malefactor at his side implores his help in heaven, and how the mocking voices that gather round his cross reproach the *Son of God* who cannot save himself, and, when they hear his sublime cry of anguish, almost look for the heavens to open, and for Elias, the Lord's avenger, to descend and deliver him.

And what was the attitude of Jesus himself toward these attestations, both of his friends and enemies,

that the word of God, the spirit of God, or some more than human power, was working in him? Did he say, like Socrates, "I am merely a man, and have no power and wisdom but my own"? On the contrary, did he not say at the very beginning of his ministry, "The spirit of the *Lord* is upon me"? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Everything he did was filled with the consciousness of his divine mission and authority. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself." Shall we say that this consciousness Jesus shows, of a profound communion with the Father, was but the illusion, or the egotism, of a prophet claiming an imaginary seal of heavenly authority upon merely human words and works? Ah, no! It was no egotist who cried, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt." It was no fanatic who offered the kingdom of heaven to the peacemakers, to the pure in heart and poor in spirit, to all the lowly, meek, and merciful, and who at the same time saw, with never-flinching clearness, that he who would be king of Israel, in that age of blood, must make his throne upon a cross. The heavenly powers which were in him, the heavenly light that was shining so peacefully in the heart of Christ, were not for any glory among men, or to bring him the kingdoms of this world.

Moreover, he claimed this divine nature, this divine authority, only as the *Son of Man*, only as first-born of many brethren, only that he might impart to his brothers the gift of life from on High which was

in himself. If he claimed that the Spirit of God was shaping and illuminating his whole nature, did he not breathe upon his disciples, and bid them also receive the Holy Ghost? Did he not promise that they should do even greater works than his own, and be led into all truth? This universal aspect of his divine claim impressed itself upon the first Christians no less than the personal exaltation of Christ himself. Through him, they said, we have access to the Father; we are made partakers of the divine nature, and are all baptized into one spirit. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God," says the apostle John. "I pray," says the apostle Paul, "that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." Says James, the brother of our Lord, "Every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Thus, in the records of the Gospels and in the exhortations of the apostles, we have one consenting testimony to two great truths,—that there was in Jesus Christ a present manifestation of God, and that this same Divine Power resides in all those who have the spirit of Christ, and who, "being led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God."

Up to this point we are on the safe ground of Scriptural affirmation and apostolic experience. Out of these great religious truths, these two spiritual perceptions,—namely, that in the life of Jesus and in all Christ-like souls there is something divine,—grow up the great doctrines of the Church. The perception of the divine in the nature of Christ gives rise to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarna-

tion: the perception of the divine in all Christian souls gives rise to the dogmas of ecclesiastical authority, sacramental grace, apostolic succession, and the superhuman claims of creed or council or pope.

It is not my purpose now to trace the history of these doctrines, or state the familiar objections to them. I ask your attention, rather, to the fundamental truths on which they rest.

Have these spiritual perceptions of the primitive Church, when removed from the vast edifice of dogma which surrounds them, any living reality in our own time? I think they have; and, indeed, it seems to me as if most of the doubts and perplexities which beset the Christianity of our time can only be met by some deeper understanding of the divine as revealed in Christ, of the divine also as revealed in the company of Christ-like souls.

The burning questions of the religion of our time, — are they not such as these? How can we have any knowledge of God? What is the connection between the Lord of Life and this world of ours, this human nature of ours? With all our added knowledge of the material world, we still see no more of God in it than did the men of old. Creation veils its Author as much as it reveals him. With all our new and subtle knowledge of human life and history, of the complexity of human passions and earthly conditions of human existence, we still feel the weakness and imperfection of our nature, and still, as much as the psalmist or preacher of a simpler age, our heart and our flesh cry out for the living God.

Now, in the character of Jesus, we are brought face to face with a man to whom the living God was a presence infinitely real. The very air he breathed was but the symbol to his thought of the Life and Spirit of God, as entering into his own life and spirit, and making him partaker of the Infinite. He could not see a sparrow fall, or a flower spring up in the field, without seeing in them the witness of an Omnipresent Love, an All-embracing Law of Life. Every thought in his mind, every desire in his heart, was lifted at its very birth far out of the sphere of passion and selfishness, and became part of the "*word* of God" and of the "*will* of God," as of a divine Truth and divine Power of which he was but the instrument.

And in what terms does he teach us of this Life of God, of which we are the children, from which we spring, to which we aspire, and in which we are new-created and redeemed from infirmity and sin? Not in the language of metaphysics does Jesus speak to us of the Father in heaven,—not as an abstract essence or ineffable substance,—but as the source of love, life, blessing, and power, as perfect holiness and untiring compassion, as self-communicating love and victorious righteousness. Not far away, in unapproachable glory, but visiting lowly hearts, humbling the proud and sinful, leading us into truth, and giving us peace and joy. To know God, is to *have* Eternal Life springing up within the soul, like fresh waters from the deep places of the rock. He gives to them that ask him; and opens the door to every hungry, heavy-laden soul that knocks to enter in.

And how is this God, whose name is love, and whose being is holiness, ever revealed to us? Simply because our humanity in its fulness is in the Divine Image. We are "children of the Highest." Even in our wanderings and our rebellion God never forgets us. We cannot cut ourselves off from his redeeming power and long-suffering compassion. The wretchedness and misery of wrong-doing pleads with us for holiness and obedience. The darkness round us makes us yearn for light. Feeding on the husks the swine did eat calls us back to our Father's house, and gives us our birthright of true joy. And how do we come into this knowledge of God's love? It is, as in our own hearts we express these divine attributes, that we know them as divine.

Therefore, as you forgive one another, you learn what God's forgiveness is. As you learn the joy of giving, and that the highest life is self-communication, the utterance of truth, imparting of life to life, as you enter into holiness and purity, having your life all order, and expressing the dominion of spirit over flesh,—in short, as you become loving, wise, and spiritually victorious,—you feel that all this human love, wisdom, and holiness is but a reflection of, or, rather, a following after, a Divine Life. You become *fellow-workers* and *builders* with God. It is God's love that rises in your heart, and sends you to your brother, ready for the uttermost service; it is God's truth and God's wisdom that clears your mind of prejudice and partiality, and gives you the true light. It is the creative

Spirit of God — the same that brooded over chaos — which, working through your conscience and your right arm, and through all your human endeavors, uses your little life as an instrument to lift all life forward, in the unfolding creation of Good, by which the Divine Mind is progressively revealed. Be loving, that you may know the love of God; be true, that you may know God's truth. Strive and pray for the kingdom of God, that you may know God is King indeed.

In other words, man learns of God by what is most God-like in his own nature. No man knoweth the Father but the Son. He that hath the Son hath the Father also. Man knows God, because man is made in the image of God. Is not this truth in harmony with all that we know both of God and man? We apprehend by the power of communion and receptivity. The eye cannot receive sound, nor the ear light. The sunlight must fall upon the crystal lenses that yield to it, and the music must throb and thrill in a mechanism that is responsive to such vibrations. And so our knowledge of God's spiritual attributes must come to us through spiritual discernments. The power of God and his infinite greatness the very devils can perceive, though they tremble; but to know God as Father of love, forgiveness, holiness, and spiritual joy, we must look up to him with the eyes of Christ. We must, like the child angels, behold the face of our Father in heaven with something of the original innocence in which he created us. This revealing of God through the fulness of

our humanity is the true *Incarnation*, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

Yet we should greatly misapprehend this truth of God in man, and man in God, if we think of this revelation and this indwelling as finished and fulfilled even in that wonderful life of Jesus. The Church's earliest thought of the Incarnation, as it appears in the Gospel of John, is far larger and deeper than that. The Incarnation is progressive. The whole company of faithful souls are the body of Christ; his flesh and blood are become the life of the world. These warm and daring metaphors have been cooled down from poetry to prose; and what was once clear and intelligible, because it was the language of the heart, becomes in the dogmas of theology utterly meaningless and obscure.

Are we so much the slaves of words that we can no longer understand the spiritual realities which underlie them? Can we not understand that *religion* speaks the language, not of metaphysical logic, but of the affections and the soul? The first Christians felt themselves *one in Christ*, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, as having Christ formed in them, and as coming to the Father through him. All such expressions mean one thing. They mean just what Jesus means in saying that wherever two or three are gathered in his name he will be with them. As we enter into the fulness of a Christ-like life, as we become followers of God, and receivers of the divine, we also enter into the *communion* of the saints. Our individualities, the things that divide and separate

us from each other, are all on the lower plane of sense and self. In the highest part of our natures we become sharers of the life of God, one with each other and with him. Just as friends who are separated by seas and mountains promise to look up to the same star and be together in spirit, so in all our life it is the earthly that divides, but the heavenly that brings us into communion. Thus it is that the higher humanity which we see in Christ, the love of truth that leads us to God, the endeavors and the sacrifices that make us fellow-laborers with, and instruments of Divine Providence,—all reveal to us our common nature, and make us “one in God.”

In your philosophy the perception that God is all in all, is but an abstraction of the intellect, the barren pantheism of metaphysics. But the higher pantheism, the pantheism of Christian life, is a moral experience. We rise to this illuminating vision of the indwelling God, not by logic, but by dying to self and sin, and by setting all our thoughts and passions in harmony with the divine law of life.

There is, moreover, another aspect of the Incarnation peculiarly dear to the Christian heart, that hereby not only is our human nature lifted up to God, but God comes down to us. It stands for the infinite condescension of God. Even in its crudest form there is a moral sublimity in this idea.

Is there not a profound truth in it which no religious mind can ever outgrow? namely, that the highest life of the soul is not the mere strife upward of

our human will, but the descending from above of heavenly gift and power. Holiness is like genius: it must be trained and ripened by effort, but in the supreme manifestation there is something present which no human striving could produce. The very word *genius* implies the working through the human mind of some divine beauty and light. Now, in the moral and spiritual perfection of our humanity, there is this same perception that the Spirit has descended. The Dove flies down from the sky, and the tongues of heavenly flame settle upon holy brows. In Jesus we have the memorable manifestation of a life which, in the moral and spiritual sphere, is full of this divine activity. When we see the brightest human excellence, we praise not the human possessor of it, but the Divine Author of it. The holiness and the love of Christ have this majestic quality: you could not praise him for being what he was, more than you could compliment a mountain for its grandeur. When we see such a perfect humanity as his, we give glory to the Father alone. Could you praise a star for shining? Could you praise that wonderful mother-love that, like an angel's wings, folds round each new life that enters into this world? Could you praise the true poet when his soul is all throbbing with the music of great thoughts? All these highest, holiest things compel us to look beyond themselves, to the Divine Life of which they are the manifestation. So it is with Jesus. His nature and his word have this absoluteness of quality which make them a revelation of the Eternal.

Have you not in your own life this consciousness that the best gifts are from above? Have you not seen in those you love that their highest and most lovable qualities seem hardly their own, but the working in them of the Lord and Giver of Life? I say, again, that when I see in any human creature the highest and most admirable qualities, I do not thank or compliment him, but I praise God. I think this is one of the things that people mean by ascribing divinity to Jesus.

Let us make real to ourselves this eternal process by which the Word is made flesh, and the divine tabernacled in the human. The human soul can purify itself to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, a revelation of God,—that is one-half of the truth; and the Divine Life and Love and Beauty do really descend and take possession of our poor human lives,—that is the second half of it.

Remember, too, that Divine Life thus descends to every part of our humanity. The spirit does not rest upon the mountain-tops, but comes gently down to bring order, peace, and power to every faculty of our natures. No part of us is shut out from God. The Word is made *flesh*. There is not, as we feebly fear, some part of us which belongs to heaven, and another which is wholly of the earth and earthy. It is the will of God that our whole nature, body, mind, soul, and spirit, should be redeemed to his service, and made glad and holy through his presence. This is the true Incarnation, man lifting up his heart to God, God coming down to man and taking *entire*

possession of his creature. This is the birth of Christ in every soul.

God grant that in this coming Christmas Day we may have some new experience of what it means to be born like Jesus of old,—a Son of the Living God!

CHRIST IN YOU.

ANGELUS SILESIVS.

[*Translation.*]

WERE Christ a thousand times reborn of Mary,
And not in thee, then art thou lost forever.

His cross on Calvary can never save thee,
Till in thine own heart is the cross uplifted.

Nor art thou profited that Christ is risen,
If deep entombed in sin and death thou liest.

Behold! the Eternal Word this day incarnate!
Where? In thy heart, when thine own life thou lovest.

God's true and only Son was Christ: I tell thee
That every child of man must be Christ also.

He who, love-lost in God, gives all to love Him,
That man is God's own son, His well-beloved.

SIN AND FREEDOM.

“Sin shall not have dominion over you.”—ROM. vi. 14.

THERE is something in human nature which resists the commandments of God. That is the solemn affirmation of Saint Paul. It is confirmed by the conscience of all spiritual men. Any view of religion, any thought of ourselves, any practical plan of life, which leaves out of sight this fundamental fact, is sure to go wrong.

Let us look at some of the different interpretations of this fact which are possible.

First is the theory of our total depravity. From Saint Paul's passionate writings theologians have built up a sublimely logical conception of a human nature, fallen in Adam's sin, incapable of any real goodness or any successful endeavor to be good, which can be “saved” only by a miracle. Divine grace overthrows and annihilates the “natural man,” and, literally regenerating the soul, makes a new man in place of the old one. This new birth is conversion. The new-born man, a child of God, is in every respect the exact opposite of the natural man, who was a child of the devil.

I will not enlarge upon this system of thought, for

its hold on the world has almost wholly passed away. It survives in the creeds, but not in the thought or feeling of the present time. No Christian parents to-day would permit Jonathan Edwards to call their children "vipers." No decent man believes himself naturally incapable of any truly good action. No thoughtful or reasonable man believes that human nature as such is vile, hateful, deserving of eternal torture at the hands of an angry God. The mere statement of the old doctrines in their logical nakedness is sufficient to refute them.

So we put the total depravity theory away as an exploded hypothesis, remembering only that it had at the bottom of it a sense of the divine holiness, so profound that, in comparison with that white light of divinity, the human creature appeared like a spot of blackness in the centre of the spiritual universe. We are so far from the moral danger of Calvinism that we may safely look upon it with respectful admiration, as one of the most colossal structures ever reared by the human mind upon a few mistaken foundations.

Secondly, we may consider a theory exactly the opposite of Calvinism. It found its most eloquent literary expression in Rousseau. It animated the French Revolution. It has inspired much of modern literature and art. The theory is that all men are born good. Pure human nature is pure innocence. The savage in his forest, the child at his play, is all lovable, all true. But this lovely angel-man, this darling of Nature, soon lost the innocence of his first

estate. He lost his child-heart, and became a cruel, sensual monster. He lost his heavenliness, and became a vile, earth-stained, sordid, stupid wretch, whose only salvation is to "return to Nature" and to become a child again. Now, what has wrought this "fall of man" from his native innocence to his actual sinfulness? The answer of Rousseau's philosophy, and of this whole sentimental school, is that man is corrupted by society and civilization. The noble savage becomes the base human creature which Rome and Paris knows. Bad laws, social conventionalities, and especially priests and tyrants, spoil our sweet, noble manhood, until what should be a glad, flowery garden of a world, wherein all men might live simply and lovingly as joyful children of a common Father, becomes this groaning old Europe, so full of miseries, where Bonnivard is in a dungeon, and Du Barry upon a throne. Therefore, "To arms! Strike down the tyrants!" Tear down the Bastile! Pass new and better laws! Declare all men equal and free! Abolish slaves and poverty! Trust the people to do right! Let us have fraternity and democracy! Let us cast away the foolish bondage of man-made laws and customs, and let us live on earth once more, like Paul and Virginia, like Crusoe and Man Friday, trusting to the inexhaustible wellspring of virtue which is in the uncorrupted human heart.

All honor to this brave and amiable doctrine! It wrought the world good service. One wishes it were true. It was a glorious and most useful reaction against Saint Augustine and Calvin. A beautiful,

bright, golden illusion is certainly much better than a hideous nightmare. Most of us would rather live under Rousseau's gospel than under Calvin's.

But nothing that is false can fail of doing harm in the long run, and therefore the common sense of the world to-day is just as far from Rousseau as it is from orthodox theology. The native innocence theory stands discredited as thoroughly as that of total depravity. It was all wrong in its affirmation. We have found out that savages are not in the least angelic, but, on the contrary, are beastly and bloody and irrational. We have found that children have in them all the germs of evil as well as of good. It was all wrong in its negation. Instead of being corrupted by society and human law, we find that human goodness is social to the very core, and that the reverence for law and justice as embodied in human institutions lies at the foundation of the best and most important virtues. And so we do not say, as the sentimentalists did, that civilization is a failure and the cause of all that is bad and wicked; but, on the contrary, we look to the process of civilization as the great hope of the world. We say that the defects of civilization are due to the defects, wickednesses, and ignorances of human nature.

Thirdly comes a theory of man's moral nature which seems to account for all the facts recognized by the last two and for many more. It has two great words,—education and evolution. The key-note was struck by Lessing in the "Education of Humanity." It has its scientific expression in the doctrine of evo-

lution. By the light of this truth we see that *human nature is neither all good nor all bad, but unfinished*. The remedy for sin is more life. The way to make men better is to develop their faculties and impulses in the direction of goodness. You notice that this theory differs from the two old theories in that it is not an attempt to find out what man was at the beginning, whether we were born depraved or born good. It shows that the whole human race and each member of it is in a process of growth. The question it asks is not, What were we when we were born? or What is natural manhood? but, rather, What can be made of man? Just as we do not care so much what the wild apple, the wild grape, or the original potato may have been, but occupy ourselves with cultivated fruits and vegetables, so with human nature. The best varieties are domesticated. Domestication is an art and a science. It is slow. It is also sure. The results attained are surprising and almost without limit.

So far as concerns the human race as a whole, this is a very hopeful view of the situation. It makes us believe that mankind can be improved to an extent we cannot now foresee. If we have produced a boneless shad, a stingless bee, a seedless orange, why not a sinless man? If the dog, the cousin of the wolf, has been made gentle, loving, and intelligent, why cannot man, the cousin of the ape, be bred and trained into a fancy breed that will keep the ten commandments?

But how is it as concerns the individual? The future perfection of the race is a grand and inspiring

subject. But it is something we shall not live to see. The practical question for us is, How far can moral education succeed within the limits of a single lifetime? Can you and I leave the improvement of our characters to posterity? or has each one of us the heavy responsibility of improving himself?

Now, as compared to the theologian with his total depravity craze, and the sentimentalist with his native innocence craze, we stand, with our modern scientific view of man, in a much more practicable situation. And, really, we retain what was practical in both.

The theologian says, "The individual man cannot save himself: no man without help from above can attain his true manhood." We admit this to be true. Man is born in sin; that is, he requires help and inspiration from a power mightier than his own will. This is probably true of all men. And in the case of the worst and weakest it is undeniably true. Therefore, we will *help* the poor, struggling human will. We must educate, train, and develop. God does not save men by miracle, but by laws of life. New life comes to men not only directly from God, but indirectly through education; and education includes government, society, science, sanitation, literature, the arts, and religion itself. We will regenerate the wayward, rebellious, earth-bound human creature with all these "saving ordinances." We will baptize the individual to new life by immersing him, body and soul, in the life of the total humanity, which is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the sentimentalist said,

"Human nature is bad because human institutions are bad: therefore, let us abolish them, and be free." Modern thought answers that we will make better institutions. Modern thought recognizes that much of what we call sin is the effect of bad drainage, corrupt politics, artificial vices, and manufactured lusts. Yet there really is an art of living. The remedy for our troubles is not to bring back a state of untrained, undisciplined humanity, but to substitute a true art of living for a false one. The art of living must be arrived at by means of experiments. Some of these will be unsuccessful. Nevertheless, we must go forward. We will send the human race to school, as in the past. But the school shall be a better one.

Our new education accepts all that was true and practical in the last-century reaction toward nature and freedom. The old repressive methods are gone. We respect the child's natural tendencies at the very time we are trying to make a different sort of creature. We will not try to run all our pupils into one mould. We respect the peculiarities of the individual, and give to each one as much freedom as we safely can.

This new method is applied to religion. The old theology invented catechisms, convents, persecutions. It tried to give one creed to all. It demanded that all men should come to the Christian life through one distinct type of conversion. The new theology allows for freedom, and admits that we need not all say the same words in order to have a fellowship in work and prayer. The old theology tried to force its iron dogma upon the reluctant reason and the rebellious

flesh. The new theology assures us that religion is the most reasonable, the most delightful expression of our true and deepest life. It is not the mortifying and prostration of our powers, but the harmonizing, the spiritualizing, of the whole man, so that with soul and heart and mind he may "love the Lord our God," and enter into his true birthright. Therefore, the church, the creeds, the liturgies, which the old church put upon us as a heavy burden, the new church offers as helps to the spiritual life. The old system was like the appliances Japanese gardeners use to dwarf and deform a growing tree. The new system supplies a trellis on which the vine may climb more easily, more unentangled, and more fruitful. My creed shall not stop my thinking, but help me to think clearly and to share the thinking of my fellow-worshippers. My habits of worship, my Sabbaths and visible signs, shall help me to a steadier, soberer faith, and save me from the tyranny of moods.

Thus it appears that what we now know of human nature, when applied in the sphere of religion, saves us from the theology which would see nothing in man but sin, and from that which saw nothing but goodness.

And, practically, when we meet the fact of evil in ourselves and other individuals, we are not permitted either to call evil good or to say that to fight against it is useless.

How it may be in the millennium for a better breed of men, how it may be in heaven for spirits of just men made perfect, we cannot tell. But for our-

selves, in our present state of being, the condition of struggle and progress is characteristic of the human soul. The blessing of perfect peace is not for our daily living. The gifts of God which we most need in the actual warfare of this world are courage, wisdom, and strength.

It is important to see how our largest, newest thoughts of human nature confirm the spiritual insight of Saint Paul, that there is a conflict of powers in the very heart of us.

This is the spiritual truth which gives such passionate interest to the daily drama of life. Men are interesting because we feel that every life, every act, is the result of contending forces, and that the nature of the result is always either victory or defeat.

This truth brings us to a sane position in regard to the old problem of free will. How much power has any man to fashion his own character, to make his own life? How much is each one of us the creature of circumstance? How much is temperament the tyrant of us all?

Believing, as I do, in the moral freedom of every human soul, let me explain what that belief means.

It does not mean that there are no laws of spiritual growth, not that by a vigorous effort you and I might be saints and angels to-morrow, or anything we please to-day. It does not mean that there is nothing to resist our efforts after the desired end of moral perfection.

The belief in moral freedom rests on the fundamental truth that there is in every man a struggle of

opposing forces, like that which Saint Paul describes in the seventh chapter of Romans. Our moral freedom does not create the conditions of the fight. You did not give yourself your temperament. You did not create the passions of human nature. You did not attach to the different impulses of your nature the varying degrees of intensity which they originally have. It is not your doing that some temptations are more dangerous, some faults more odious than others. All these things are simply the conditions of the fight, the laws of the game.

Your freedom consists in your ability to better your situation by your own honest, patient effort. No man who is honestly striving against the powers of evil within him, need ever fight a losing battle.

This being granted, as the verdict of common sense, the question then rises, How far should we accept the faults of our natures, the downward tendencies in ourselves, as inevitable?

At this point the doctrine of the Bible is particularly clear, positive, helpful, and, moreover, in accordance with common sense. When I say the Bible, I mean the best of the Bible, and especially the teaching of Jesus.

The Bible recognizes the universal fact of sinfulness. "It must needs be that offences come." This makes for charity, pity, and patience. "Neither do I condemn thee," that is the word of pity, of philosophy; but "Go, and sin no more," that is the word of hope, the word of religion.

The Bible, then, while counting all men sinners,

says that there is in every man the power to rise up and leave the particular form of sin into which he has fallen. Every man is free to take victorious steps toward a higher life, free to repent,—that is, to hate and reject his evil past,—free to be converted,—that is, to turn with earnest desire and prayer toward a better future,—free to be more and more successful in his progress toward his ideal.

That we are so, both conscience and Scripture agree to certify. But the doctrine of the Bible is that our freedom so to do depends upon a truth which is deeper still,—namely, that what God commands he gives us power to become; or, in other words, the demands of the moral law, the claim of Christ, only require that we should be what God meant us to be, and what his whole universe helps us to be. The moment I put forth an effort toward goodness I am like a tree which sends a root down into “rivers of water.” Every effort of a righteous will has God’s omnipotence behind it. The joyous word of faith which is added to the anxious struggle of “mere morality,” is, “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory.”

The truth is that the old question of freedom and fate is for the schools, and not for life; for the limits of our real freedom are always far beyond the perceptions of our moral sense. Practically, the feeling that you ought to do or be a certain thing is an evidence that it is in your power so to do or be. When Duty whispers low, “Thou must,” the soul replies, “I can”; and, therefore, there is no such thing as a moral inability in the sphere of present duty. For

to-day's task the strength is given; and the problem of to-morrow, though now it seems impossible, will bring its own solution. A great Frenchman said, "Between thy couch and the frontiers of the world there are two steps,—will and faith." It is true: will for to-day, faith for to-morrow,—that is the believing attitude of all strong souls.

The reality and the limitation of our moral freedom, practically unlimited, but theoretically limited, admit of many illustrations. The eagle is free to soar above the peaks of the Alps, but not, above the limits of the atmosphere. The fish in the sea cannot leave the watery element. The deer is free only within his forest. But these creatures have no wish to pass the bounds which God has set. So it is with man in his moral constitution. He is not free to be an angel, because, in fact, he does not want to be. But he is free to be a man, and to fill the full area of his human capacities, so far as they lie within the sphere of conscience.

I say within the sphere of conscience. When people talk of fate, of destiny, of the soul that beats its wings in vain against the cage of Time, they mean limitations in things which do not concern conscience. It is true that you and I cannot be Shaksperes or Napoleons or Beethovens, but neither does conscience ask us so to be. Genius and fortune are not our achievements, but the gifts of Heaven. As Marcus Aurelius would say, "Though thou canst not wear the purple of a Cæsar, yet thou canst be a Roman and a man."

The things which God really requires of us are of extreme simplicity and quite within reason. We are not asked to imitate Christ in his sinless perfection nor in his miracles, but only in his lowliest service, his love, his obedience, his sacrifice.

"If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

Conscience, as so interpreted by faith, is not only a teacher of duty, but marks what grade of moral power a soul has attained.

If you feel the unworthiness of your present self, if you have within a longing for a truer and more fruitful life, that unrest in your heart, that aspiration within, means that the new life can be yours if you will pay the price of effort and patience.

What you feel you ought to be is God's witness in your heart of what you can be.

Alas for the unawakened conscience which lies, as Scripture says, "dead in sin," having no sorrow for its past and present evil, no desire, no ideal, no marching on, no upward reach of strife and tears! but "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Freedom, then, is the gift of God in our moral nature. Its limitations lie beyond our reach, beyond our daily problem and duty. In philosophy we can see that there are limits. In life there are no limits we need ever feel.

There is no fate:
Thy high or low estate
Comes of thy climbing or thy falling down.

No baleful star
A brave man's bliss can bar,
No kingly planet keep a coward's crown.

Dost thou complain
Because God's frost and rain
To thy white cheek seem much too wet or cold?
Dost thou not know
How whirlwind, storm, and snow
Swathe earth in robes of silver, fold on fold?

Cease, luckless man,
To curse thy being's plan!
For, wert thou to thine own true birthright true,
Thou wert set free,
As are the winds, the sea,
Or eagles mounting in the trackless blue.

A THANATOPSIS.

DEATH is an angel with two faces.
To us he turns
A face of terror, blighting all things fair :
The other burns
With glory of the stars, and love is there,
And angels see that face in heavenly places.

Two strong, sharp swords are in the hands of Death :
One smites to dust
Dear beauty's idol and the thrones of power ;
And long, sweet years, in that brief, awful hour,
Vanish because they must.
His other and his stronger sword is just.
It slays untruth, and mocks at this world's lust,—
O liberating Death !

Strive, O my soul, to see
The heavenly face and that delivering sword !
Till I shall be
All fashioned truly to the Incarnate Word,
And live, not knowing Death, in Thee, O Lord !

A WORD TO THE WISE.

“The world by wisdom knew not God.”—I COR. i. 21.

THE insufficiency of the reason in matters of religion and morals is, as you are all aware, a fundamental doctrine of all orthodox creeds. We have just heard the conclusion in this city of a trial which charged an eminent scholar with heresy and false doctrine, because, among other doubtful teachings, he had maintained that human reason, apart from the Scriptures and the Church, is a source of spiritual truth for man. If this doubt of reasoning be found in a Protestant community, much clearer and more vigorous is the anti-rational position of the Church of Rome. Yet here, as elsewhere, the Roman theology is more logical, more rational in its attack on reason, than the Protestants generally are; for the Church of Rome does not deny, but most distinctly and reverently affirms, that reason is a divine gift to man. All Catholic philosophy is clear upon this point. The human intellect is no less than an indwelling within us of a divine light, and gives us fellowship in that eternal wisdom by which the worlds were made. By this power men have explored the secrets of nature, and mastered her resistless forces. Art and science.

inventions, discoveries, state-craft, commerce, methods of education, governments, helps, healings, diversities of tongues,—all such triumphs of what is called civilization are won by the use of man's natural reason. The theologians of the Vatican would go, I suppose, as far as you or I, in esteeming the importance of these achievements of the free intellect and in praising God, who has given such dominion, but little lower than the angels, to the "son of man."

But this natural endowment of reason, it is claimed, is so weak, so unsuccessful, when applied to matters of "faith and morals," that in this sphere some higher guidance is necessary. The mind that can weigh the satellites of Jupiter or invent some marvellous engine, may fall into lamentable error when met by a problem of simple right and wrong, or when asked a question concerning the dealings of God with a sinful soul; for these things hath God hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. It is notorious that an illustrious statesman, a prodigy of science, or even an artist, who re-creates the glory of the world, or a poet, who re-echoes nature's loveliest song, may be men who live an evil life, have cold, selfish hearts, and are blind as senseless animals to the beauty of holiness and the mysteries of God. Therefore, says the thoughtful ecclesiastic, it is evident that the wisdom of the world can only render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; but not true worship to God the Father; nor teach us those vital and all-important truths, in the knowledge of which standeth our eternal life.

I put this protest against reason as strongly as I can, for I believe it to be necessary. Reason is but a part of man; and it leads him into error, not less than passion and blind instinct do. The intellect can exalt man above all other earthly creatures; but it cannot alone lift him up to his birthright as a child of God, or even guide him safely along the common highway of life. I would go as far as Saint Augustine, almost as far as a Jesuit or a Presbyterian, in affirming the inadequacy — nay, the perversion and failure — of the intellect, if trusted alone, as an oracle of faith, or as an inspirer of duty, love, and holy living.

You are well aware what ecclesiasticism, and Orthodoxy of every type, say must be the consequence of admitting the insufficiency of reason in religion and conduct. I can remember that, when I first met this line of reasoning, it almost persuaded me to accept the Churchman's claim of supernatural authority.

I think it very important that we of the unchartered provinces of Christendom should give this argument due weight; for, if it be true that reason is not a sufficient guide of life, who so much in danger as ourselves of going contrary by trusting reason overmuch?

Moreover, unless we understand how limited is the sphere of rationality in life, we shall fail to appreciate the immense success of the prevailing forms of Christianity; for the effect of the Christian Church upon the community is far greater than its hold upon the ideas and the opinions of men, great as that is. It succeeds on account of its splendid discipline and its

uplifting appeal to noble affections. The Church does not teach men to think. It teaches them to act and to love. It is not an academy, not a debating club. It is an army, a family, and a house of prayer; and so the great Christian community, full of error and ignorance, not the least fastidious about consistency, goes on in a masterful way disciplining men to righteous and clean living, and touching their hearts with vague but powerful sentiments of loyalty, pity, reverence, kindness, and self-devotion.

Now, I am so much of a rationalist that I believe truth and right-thinking are the foundation-rock of life, and that all untruth and wrong and careless thinking make men less noble, less steadfast in goodness, and less a power for good, however well-meaning they be.

Nevertheless, I recognize that a foundation is not a building. So, until our rationalism and our liberality do something to strengthen character and warm the heart, they are certainly vain.

Let us consider the points in which Orthodoxy is stronger than we, even where, and just because, it is less reasonable than we, and let us see what we have to take its place as a guide of life. What, then, does Orthodoxy regard as above reason and better than reason?

First, the Bible. The old-fashioned Christian believes his Bible, every word of it. You and I do not. We claim the right to criticise it, to sift it, to trace in it a many-sided human story. We study the Bible historically, find out why it was ever written and put

together at all, and why it is of such varied worth. Now, if after all this higher criticism, we leave the Bible unopened, with clean white pages and dusty covers, how immense is our loss! If the Bible no longer reveals to us any eternal, divine word, no longer helps us worship the Father, no longer touches our lives with love, trust, and zeal for goodness, no longer reveals inspiring examples of faith and service, then the most unlettered man or woman who ever wept or glowed over the sacred page has something we have not.

My friends, there is nothing to take the place of the Bible as a source of spiritual light and moral enthusiasm. I believe the Bible can stand on its own merits, and needs no prop of superstition to hold it up. I believe the more we understand what those books mean and what they say, the more lovely and venerable they will be. But we cannot be blind to the fact that the habit of Bible-reading is declining. The very freedom and accessibility of the book make against it. There was a time when men shed their blood for the priceless privilege of "reading the Scriptures." Even now men are struggling and suffering abuse and misrepresentation for liberty to study the Bible freely and intelligently. And yet, just as there are people in London who never saw Westminster Abbey, just as there are Swiss who never saw the Matterhorn, as there are Americans who never read our Constitution, so among yourselves, with the Bible in every house, with our hard-won liberty of its use and interpretation, people pass

it by, neglect it, and leave their children ignorant of the treasure which is their heritage.

Surely, we rationalists are the people of all others who need the Bible most as a help to our faith and life; for it strengthens us most when men's argument and intelligence are weakest. It touches the imagination, deepens feeling, makes men reverent and earnest. The Bible shows us "the mystery of godliness." It is good for us that its scenes are so foreign, so ancient, so beautiful, and its language so sublime, and often so difficult. This I am sure of: that, if you go to your Bible with nothing but your criticism, your worldly wisdom, your theories, you will not hear what its message tells. Into that kingdom you must enter as a little child. Carry a listening heart, and listen most to what you love or feel most deeply. Apply, if you will, your philosophy and history to the Bible, but apply it to yourself, your conduct, to your affections, to your longings after God. Its spiritual riches must be spiritually discerned.

So, then, if the Bible is to touch your life, you must separate your criticism of it from your daily use of its holier portions for devotional and moral help. Remember that religion is not only a belief. It is a habit of the soul. Remember that a good and noble life is formed very little on theories of life, almost wholly by communion with great examples, by love of radiant souls, by having one's daily thoughts possessed with what is lovely and of good report. You have some native spring within of love to God and your neighbor; but this native spring is variable and lim-

ited. You need to kneel with Christ in his prayers, to go with him upon his errand through the cities of Judah, bringing faith and blessing as he goes. You have some natural indignation against wrong, some loyalty to what is just and noble; but the temptations of the flesh and of the world will beset you every day. You need to burn with prophet and apostle, as they hold up wickedness to scorn. You need to fight their warfare over, by hearing its story.

Can it be that you are so confident of your virtue and spiritual elevation that you feel no need of such help to better living? Then go to your Bible, that you may be humbled and stirred by the sight of goodness in a grander style, and know that breathing through the thoughts of all God's most faithful sons is a sense of aspiration, a prayer of confession, and a hope of forgiveness.

Or does life's moral demand already burden you so much that you dare not confront any sublimer standard, and, struggling along the lower levels of your poor partial attainments, dare not look upward to any mountain of difficulty and more exacting ideal?

Then go to the Bible, that you may learn how lovingly the Father deals with all who struggle and are weary, and what are the great redeeming forces that have lifted many weaker men out of the same troubles, the same sins, that mar and check your better life. See Moses, the wrathful, the shedder of blood, made in God's hands an instrument of strong deliverance for a people of slaves. Hear David's penitence, and see his sins made white by sorrow and faithful ser-

vice. Read the Lamentations of exiles, martyrs, and patriots, and how God's hand sustained them in the hour of loss and under the dark cloud. Then learn how Christ was "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and how by the spirit of Christ a great company is gathered, who by love and faith and patient hope are saved out of an evil world, saved from themselves, and led to victory and peace.

I care not on what spiritual plane you stand. You cannot get beyond the Bible. You cannot fall so low as to fall outside its divine spirit of pity and redemption. It is a book for saints and for sinners, for all. It has a story for the child, a song for the poet, wisdom for the sage, and practical guidance for the busy world of men and women, such as most of you live in. If you neglect it, you are casting a birthright away. It is a heritage for which your fathers struggled like heroes, and which, if you lose, your children must win anew, by long and weary warfare against superstition and unbelief; for the Bible is the world's book,—a book for all time and every nation,—and not to know it is to be, in the strictest sense, a *barbarian*, outside the circle of man's noblest life.

Consider now the second source of authority, which Orthodoxy places alongside of and above the natural light of reason. I mean the Church. The doctrine in its extreme form is that whatever the Church teaches or ever has taught must be true, however false and irrational it appears.

With all its faults and errors, it must be admitted that the Church has done, and is doing still, a most

necessary work for mankind. It provides discipline for the will, and secures for men reverent habits, and the great power and enthusiasm which come of men getting together in multitudes for the accomplishment of high and noble aims. In a word, the Church gives to religion and to conduct two immense powers,—the power of drill and the power of organization.

Even the intellectual life of man is crude and ineffective, unless each man, as it were, be supervised, trained and quickened, by some touch with the great impersonal body of human knowledge. That is what schools mean, and the university. They mean that the minds of your boys and girls need drill. The youthful intelligence, with tireless ingenuity, is exercised, watched, corrected, and made to acquire habits of attention and method. A country without schools is always ignorant; and an individual who has never had schooling, however great the native power, is always intellectually awkward. Then, after much training and discipline of intellectual habits, we send the youth to the university. The intention is that he shall come in touch with the main stream of the world's intellectual life, and, even at the expense of losing individuality, be saved for the rest of his career from fads, delusions, and barbaric or outgrown ideas. Universities do not succeed with all men; and men of good minds, by travel, by reading, by broad intellectual interests, find their university in the world. But, however it be won, we recognize that there is such a thing as what Matthew Arnold used to call "culture"; *i.e.*, being in touch with the world's best

thought of all times and abreast of all the newest knowledge.

If, now, this patient drill and this large fellowship with superior minds be necessary even to develop the intellectual powers, how much more necessary is it in matters of faith and morals! What an academy can do for literature, what a university or scientific institute does for science, that the Church undertakes to do for faith and for conduct.

Why, then, do we liberal Christians not accept the Church? and what have we in her place?

First, because the world has been for some centuries growing to see that freedom is no less important than organization. If there were nothing in the world but drill and organization, we should be like the Chinese. The greatest steps forward which ever have been made by the human race were taken by men who stood outside what was accepted and traditional. We need not only the quiet, conservative forces of civilization, but we need the pioneer, the reformer, and the discoverer. In science the necessity of freedom has been abundantly demonstrated. Had men gone on thinking like their fathers and like all the world, we should never have had Galileo nor Columbus, nor Harvey, Newton, Darwin, or Pasteur. If the academies and the universities had absorbed all the intellectual life of men, we should never have the progress in art, the strong and varied literature which is the glory of European life.

We liberal Christians stand for this principle of freedom and progress in religion. This principle is

the Protestant principle of private judgment, what the noble Puritans called "the liberty of prophesying."

This principle we chiefly stand for. This freedom we maintain. And more and more the whole religious world is coming to recognize its sacredness.

Important as this service is which liberals render to the rest of the world, yet, if we consider our personal needs, it is evident that we may be in danger from losing out of our own lives just that drill, that organization, that strength of habit and strength of fellowship, which the old Church gives to all the world except ourselves.

If we were all prophets, poets, religious geniuses, the loss would not matter. If we were individually like Luther or Channing or Emerson, we might dispense with such spiritual bread as is distributed from the tables of the church; but, on the contrary, we are all learners, not originators. Our spiritual life, our faith, our moral tone, are vastly influenced by our habits and by our surroundings.

Therefore, just as our rationalism makes it the more necessary that we should read and love to read our Bibles; so our liberalism makes it the more essential that we should be faithful to all the forms and institutions of religion which do not interfere with a reasonable liberty.

But a grave decline seems to be going on in the matter of religious habits. In our plea for freedom, we are losing the immense benefits of drill. The good old custom of family devotion is vanishing from the home. Church-going is suspended for the light-

est cause. Even the beautiful and affecting symbols of baptism and of the Lord's Supper are in many liberal congregations wholly disused.

The Puritan, with his intense religious life,—every man a priest in his own house,—might well make public worship bare and plain; but, surely, in this age of splendor and art, we cannot dispense with any means by which the external forms of worship shall subdue us to reverence, and reach the heart through eye and ear.

We, of all other men, need the apostle's injunctions, both that we should "stand fast in our liberty" and also that we should not "use liberty as occasion to the flesh"; *i.e.*, for doing as we like.

Especially do we need to realize the great truth there is in religion and in life, a sphere which "passeth understanding."

"The world by wisdom knew not God." Faith has not been born out of men's philosophies, but rather out of the great emotional and heart-reaching experiences of which human life is made, out of love and sorrow and the sense of sin, out of struggle, out of the love of justice and the hunger for a better world, out of great storms, when all the waves and the billows have passed over the soul. Through these has the wonderful faith risen up in men's hearts that God is our eternal Father. Not of literature, not of schools and scribes, has religion been given to men, though by these it has been systematized and taught. For the supreme inspirations of faith we do not look to the groves of Athens, nor to Eastern sages, nor to

Western laboratories. We look to Gethsemane, to Calvary, to Galilee. As with faith, so with righteousness. All the commandments, all ethical systems, are only the description in words of the way good men and women do really strive to live. Only because these — honesty, purity, peace, and kindness — were already in the world, were laws and maxims made to encourage them. Jesus says, "Your righteousness must be better than that of the scribes, or you cannot go into the kingdom of heaven." The scribes and Pharisees tried to reduce life to a rule, to a system; but Jesus says that cannot be, for a good life comes of the fulness of love and light within the soul.

In other words, we find in Christian goodness a warmth, a largeness, a delicacy of feeling, which quite overpass all verbal and logical statement. The new commandment of love which Christ gives is not a commandment at all, but a demand for an inward renewal of our very very life both toward our heavenly Father and our brother.

Therefore, in your plea for a reasonable and free religion do not forget that in this sphere the intellect may criticise, but not create. In all that is most sacred, most inspiring, most beautiful in human experience, there is always more than you can understand. You cannot argue a man into love. You cannot lecture him into a joyful sense of the poetry and beauty of the world. Neither can you impart faith by articles and conclusions.

As thought is deeper than all speech, so are your

life with God and your fellowship with your brother far deeper and larger than any creed can be.

"The world by wisdom knew not God." Let this assurance give you calmness and patience in a time of debating and creed-making and criticism such as we live in.

Hear the argument. Respect the eager search for truth. Be faithful to your liberty and light.

But know that this apparatus of the scribes is only the beginning, only the preparation, for your worship of the Father in spirit and in truth.

Of the making of books there is no end.

If God were known, his love revealed and his mercy trusted only by those who scale the steep places of human philosophy, then, indeed, there were no gospel at all for the great half-blinded world of toil-worn, suffering men.

But God is made known to us as a Father through those experiences which are common to all and within the reach of all God's children.

To the pure he showeth himself pure. To the merciful he showeth himself merciful.

We know him best as we find him through the life-experience of our common humanity, through simple, natural gladness, the gladness of daily need and unpurchasable sunshine, through sorrow, effort, faithful service, unquenchable affections, bearing a brother's burden, being brave, hopeful, and patient.

These are the elements in our nature to which Christ speaks, to that spiritual life of faith and love which is with "all sorts and conditions of men."

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they who come to God, not in the pride of their attainments, their refinements, their strong and subtle minds, but who offer unto him just the simple, brave true, and loving heart.

“The world by wisdom knew not God.”

But, because Christ made known the preciousness, the beauty, the power, which is in man as man, because he drew his parables of divine things from man's lowliest estate, because he has wakened the world of rich and poor, of Cæsars and slaves, to a sense of a common humanity, therefore he has revealed our one Father in heaven.

The spirit of Christ in every age is the same. You and I enter into it, not by any knowledge or wisdom which separates us from other men, but only by our share in the grand democracy of the spirit, by our touch with the common heart of man.

That in human nature which is divine and heavenly is that in which the world's distinctions do not enter. It is the life of courage, love, and faith within the soul, which is for all God's children, his “little ones,” wherever they may be.

A SABBATH EVENING.

I THANK Thee, Lord, that just to day
I have not seemed to go astray,
And that to-night, the setting sun
Smiles only on my duty done.

Father, not thus Thy name I bless,
From proud or blind self-righteousness,
Nor that I thus would hope to win
Remission of some wilful sin.

But if to-night I lift my eyes
Unto the all-beholding skies,
And seem to feel within me shine
Some kinship with their calm divine,—

The silent blessing bids me pray,
By this one glad and blameless day
To learn what all my days might be,
If each were holy unto Thee.

A CRITICISM OF HERESY.

“Need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men.”
2 COR. iii. 1.

It was the custom in the apostle's time for a Christian teacher, going from one congregation to another, to carry letters of introduction and commendation. By this reasonable precaution, unworthy men were excluded, and useful men assisted. It was the rudimentary discipline of the primitive Church. These little letters of fraternal introduction, so obviously necessary and proper, were an ecclesiastical guarantee of a minister's soundness in faith and character. They accomplished the same ends that in our time are aimed at by the varied machinery of modern churches. Trials for heresy, an examination by synod or conference, or an impeachment by a self-constituted committee, or a sentence by a bishop,—none of these energetic methods of preserving “unity and concord” in the Church had then been tried. I do not say that the primitive Church is necessarily a model for all time. I do not believe it is. Nevertheless, it is always instructive to see how the problems of the early Church were dealt with; and we see that, even in this matter of letters of introduction, the great

free mind of Paul declares that there is a witness to his ministry, better and more trustworthy than any written credentials; namely, the living record of his life and teaching, in that Corinthian church where he had labored so fruitfully. He appeals from the witness of a written form, to the witness of living voices and living men.

It may be we catch some tone of irritation in this appeal, for the apostle Paul was much harassed and interfered with by the other party in the Church. He was thought a preacher of strange innovations. His practices were free beyond precedent. In his eagerness to reach the Gentile world with the gospel of his Master, he was carried on to say and do many things which seemed very dangerous, and even blasphemous, to those who could not see outside the limits of Judaistic traditions. His largeness of view was accounted mere looseness and want of faith. His enthusiasm was disparaged as the evidence of a self-willed and rebellious nature.

So, even in that Apostolic Church of the first generation after Christ, there were, as now, divisions, controversies, personal jealousies, bigotry, injustice, and general disturbances. The new and glorious mission of Christianity to the world, the preaching of the love of God, the story of Jesus and his sacrifice, the bringing of a victorious love and heavenly hope into human hearts, and thereby a regeneration of human society,—all this glad tidings had to make its way then, as now, against foes without and fightings within. The treasure was in earthen vessels.

So, also, if we cast our view over the whole range of Christian history, we find the same condition of things. There are always controversies, always misunderstandings, always parties in opposition. Great and good men are divided from each other; and men whose characters are such as honor human nature, men whose whole lives are spent in search of truth, in the service of their fellow-men, have been treated like criminals.

Is it not one of the saddest sights? Is not this turbulent history of the Church, whose gospel is peace and love, one of the most melancholy evidences of the littleness of man?

These reflections are naturally suggested to us by the present agitations in the religious world. It is necessary for us to set these contemporary events in the large light of the past. As we do so, we see at once that these interesting persecutions with which the newspapers are busy, are encouraging signs of the times. Compared with the awful persecutions of the past, these annoyances are as spring showers to a cyclone. What was once a terrible and dangerous accusation is now a regretful suspicion. What was once a furious curse is now a pitying sigh. What would once on mere suspicion have consigned a man to a horrid dungeon, and finally to death by torture, is hardly enough now, unless the victim is very nervous, to spoil a single night's sleep. The victory of toleration is won, and not all the fiercest rhetoric in the world can ever bring the old issues back. Whatever cruel and uncharitable things may be said, no

one really believes that the distinguished men now accused of heresy are a pestilential and evil influence in the community.

Indeed, it is a matter of congratulation that the men against whom the light batteries of the modern inquisition are directed are so eminently able to bear up under the assault. What need they, as do some, "letters of commendation" from any formal authority? They may appeal, or their friends may appeal for them, to what is "known and read of all men,"—their public services, their long and fruitful ministries, their characters as Christian men. If this agitation be a persecution, it is not a cowardly one. The heresy-hunter at present is like death: he "loves a shining mark."

The tyranny of the received opinion is never so galling and painful to distinguished men as it is to the rank and file. Bigotry and intolerance are hardest to bear when their victims are made to feel their power in the common walks of life, and a disfellow-shipped minority are frowned down by a thoughtless majority. While, therefore, the eminent preachers and theologians now on trial before their respective churches naturally receive, and deserve to receive, the sympathy of all liberal thinkers because of their position, yet we must remember that there are many who need our sympathy far more. The lonely radical in a remote country town, who finds himself arrayed in opposition to all the "powers that be" in his little community, suffers an amount of annoyance and persecution in behalf of his progressive opinions, which

in the case of a popular metropolitan preacher would be quite impossible. Let us remember, then, that the troubles of these distinguished men accused of heresy are not only not worth mentioning in comparison with former times, but are very much less than what thousands of people all over the country are suffering for the sake of their religious opinions, when those opinions are against the generally accepted creed of the communities they live in.

It is my impression, however, that the remarkable coincidence of so many independent protests against supposed heresies in the churches, is not due to a general outburst of bigotry and intolerance. Some bigoted and narrow-minded people are usually the instigators. But the general public interest and excitement, especially in the denominations concerned, has a deeper motive; namely, a wide-spread curiosity on the part of an intelligent laity, to know what the creeds and confessions of the churches really mean.

As to the case of Dr. Briggs, nothing can be clearer than the language of the Westminster Confession. It is a masterpiece of unambiguous teaching, of which the vigorous rhetoric casts no obscurity over the most irrational and hateful of its affirmations. It may be irrational, it may be untrue, it may defy both conscience and Scripture; but, at least, there seems to be no mistaking what it says. There is, however, a growing tendency, among Presbyterians, who feel the modern spirit, to soften the harsher features of Calvinism. They are, moreover, diligent and intelli-

gent students of Scripture; and all intelligent study of the Scriptures, among people of any cultivation of mind, cannot fail to promote liberal inquiry as to the nature and origin of Scripture, and to awaken grave problems concerning its inspiration and authority. In Scotland these liberal movements have carried the Presbyterian clergy much further than in this country. There is here no Robertson Smith, no Caird; and the American Presbyterian remains as much more vigorous in orthodoxy as he is inferior in scholarship to his brother of Scotland. Naturally enough, then, heterodoxy first appears in the highest circle of Academic Presbyterianism. It is followed by an earnest inquiry, from the rank and file both of clergy and laity, how far this movement is going: they ask in Dr. Briggs's own word, "Whither?"

Standing as I do, outside the whole controversy, I think the curiosity and anxiety of the lay Presbyterian quite justified. Scholarship and free Biblical criticism undermine inevitably the Westminster Confession; and, whatever professors say to the contrary, the layman, with his plain common sense, knows it. He knows that the doctrines of Calvinism are irrational and horrible; but he thinks he finds them in his Bible, and he thinks that, if there, he must accept them. But, if the Bible is not verbally accurate (as Dr. Briggs learnedly phrases it, *not inerrant as to minor details*), why, the plain layman concludes that his Bible may go just a little wrong sometimes; and, as he derives his peculiar system of doctrine, not from the general spirit and tendency of Biblical

religion, but from a text here and there (texts of doubtful or tortured meaning), he goes on to conclude that *his system has not that character of dead certainty which he had supposed*. And, if Calvinism be not received as a dead certainty, it is so odious, so paradoxical, that men turn to some other theology.

The old-fashioned Presbyterian believes that his creed stands or falls with the *inerrancy* of the Scripture. I believe he is quite right. His instinct, or his logic, warns him truly; and, if he be a scholar, he knows that the study of the Bible in the historical and critical spirit, in Germany, in England, in America, invariably leads to the unsettling of dogmatic theology, and drives men either into Unitarianism, which he fears, or High Churchism, which he detests. *Popular Protestantism is grounded upon the uncritical use of the Scriptures*: once driven from this position, it has no alternative between *Reason*, with all its danger and struggle, and *Rome*, with its priestcraft and superstition. The heresy-hunting, therefore, in the Presbyterian Church, springs from no personal or local causes, but is one of the signs of the times, and is the result, generally speaking, of the scientific and critical study of the Scriptures.

In the Episcopal Church, however, this Scriptural question is complicated with another; namely, the nature and authority of the Church. By its history and antecedents, the Episcopal Church is essentially a Church of Compromise, being in this respect like the English government, in which the principles of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy exist side by

side. Being a Protestant Church, it has been obliged to afford shelter for movements of theological and ecclesiastical change. The extremes of thought which are included under the flowing folds of the Anglican establishment are a source of great bewilderment to the more logical American mind. In England, however, the bond which holds these contradictory elements together is not spiritual, but material. The establishment is a social institution. It possesses not only a common tradition of Christian history, but also a goodly heritage of benefices, and the present enjoyment of very tangible privilege and authority.

In America this cohesive effect of the secular establishment being absent, the straining asunder of the opposite tendencies has little restraint. In England the average Churchman, whether High, Broad, or Low, looks upon all things outside the establishment, as an officer in the regular army looks upon the militia, or more violently, as educated physicians regard empirics and quacks. In American Episcopacy, however, such a feeling has less to feed upon. The Broad Churchman, therefore, goes as far as he can toward breaking down the exclusiveness which the canons and traditions of his Church enforce or encourage. The High Churchman, however, plants himself on the old theory of an exclusive Church: that only in the Episcopal Church are the true apostolic succession, the true sacraments and body of Christ, the perfect doctrine and the promised salvation, the acceptable worship and sacrifice; and, while it is not denied that by the "uncovenanted mercies"

of God individuals are saved outside of the Episcopal communion, yet, as a *Church*, none other is acceptable to God, or authorized as the mediator of Divine Grace to men. In brief, the Church, according to this view, is a miracle,—miraculous in its origin, in its history, and in its present endowments. It is the ark of the Divine Indwelling that floats secure above a stormy world.

Now, while I believe that the only logical result of the High Church theory is where Cardinal Newman found it, in the Church of Rome, and that Anglicanism is the frailest structure possible, either logically or historically, yet it does seem to me, an outsider, that not only the Prayer Book, but still more the canons and practices of the Episcopalians, give the High Churchman the advantage. So long as no Episcopal clergymen can recognize even an orthodox minister of another denomination, the exclusive and sacramental theory is thereby affirmed. The Broad Churchman may affirm as clearly as has Mr. Rainsford in a recent sermon, that “wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, there is Christ in the midst of them”; or as earnestly as Phillips Brooks and Heber Newton, that “as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the children of God”: yet such a scriptural and truly Catholic doctrine is directly negatived by the Episcopal tradition and practice.

But is it not quite reasonable, one may ask, that the Broad Church party should labor to break down these exclusive traditions? It is, indeed; and let us give them all honor for doing so.

But, from my Unitarian point of view, I cannot but think there is in the High Churchman's position a deeper meaning and better logic than appears on the surface. Why does he maintain the divine authority of the Church? It is because *the Church alone is authority for all the doctrines which the Church teaches*. The truth is that every Episcopal clergyman makes at his ordination two promises, which are, though he may be ignorant of the fact, inconsistent with each other. First, he promises "to teach nothing as necessary to eternal salvation but that which he shall be persuaded *may be concluded and proved by the Scripture*." This is the consoling word for his Protestant or liberal tendencies. But in the next breath his liberty is taken away, and he promises his bishop "always so to minister the doctrine, sacraments, and discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, *and as this Church hath received the same*." Thus, in the very terms of his ordination vow, every Episcopal minister declares his belief, and promises always to believe, that "the teaching of the Scripture," the "commandment of the Lord," and the received doctrines of the Episcopal Church, are identical. The Protestant principle, "nothing that is not Scripture," and the Catholic principle, "everything that is Church," are here violently jumbled together, with the heroic illogicality which characterizes the British mind, when bent upon practical compromise.

Observe now what this situation leads to. Planting himself on the second half of his ordination pledge, the High Churchman takes the phrases of the

Prayer Book in their historic sense, and maintains the doctrines of the Real Presence, apostolic succession, priestly absolution, and baptismal regeneration. But the Low Churchman, planting himself upon Scriptural Protestantism, explains away the obvious meaning of the Prayer Book in the phrases directly inherited from the Church of Rome, and denies all these doctrines by declaring them unscriptural, and therefore unessential.

But the trouble is that the Scriptural canon is manifestly insufficient to prove all the doctrines which are essential even to the orthodoxy of a Broad Churchman. For example, the "Nicene Creed," as recited in the English and American Church, affirms that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. The words "and the Son" were, as is well known, introduced into the creed by the Latin Church two hundred and fifty years after it was made. The Greek Church refused the clause *filioque*, and teaches that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only. Now, I do not suppose any Latin Churchman, still less any Protestant Episcopalian, would really maintain that either doctrine as to the procession of the Holy Spirit can be "concluded and proved" by Scripture. American Episcopacy accepts the *filioque* clause, simply because it is the child of the Latin Church.

The same creed, also, in the words "being of one substance with the Father" condemns, you remember, the Arian heresy. If the dispute between the Arians and the Athanasians could have been settled by a

mere appeal to Scripture, it would have been so settled. But, in point of fact, it could only be settled by the authority of a Church Council, that of Nicæa. The doctrine of the Trinity, then, as it is taught in the Book of Common Prayer, is not and never can be "concluded and proved" by Scripture. It can only be so maintained by Scripture as interpreted by the first five œcumenical councils. In brief, the doctrine of the Trinity rests on the same authority as the doctrine of the Real Presence and expiatory sacrifice in the Eucharist, or the doctrine of priestly absolution, or of the papal supremacy; namely, upon the *authority of Scripture as interpreted by Church Councils*.

If the bishops were inspired when they decided that the New Testament teaches the consubstantiality and coequality of three persons in the Godhead, why were they not equally safe guides when they interpreted the *Tu es Petrus* as establishing the primacy of the Bishop of Rome? As a Unitarian, I am at liberty to believe that the bishops were wrong in both instances, and that neither doctrine is in the New Testament, as critically and rationally interpreted. So general is the consent of modern scholars that the Trinity is not taught in the New Testament, that great Churchmen, like Cardinal Newman, have resorted to most ingenious theories to show why the apostles were permitted to be silent on so important a point.

While, therefore, I sympathize with the Broad Churchman in his liberal theology, I also believe that the High Churchman is correct in saying that only by

a strict view of the divine authority of the Church, as having in her councils and traditions the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is it possible to maintain the integrity of orthodox standards of doctrine. It is true that Broad Churchmen both here and in England sincerely believe that they can defend the doctrine of the Trinity on philosophic grounds, as the truest and most reasonable statement of the Divine Nature. In the same way they can defend the discipline of Lent, or the threefold order of the ministry, as being proved by human experience most useful and desirable. The High Churchman, however, understands that the general acceptance of this doctrine, and these institutions, is not a matter of philosophy at all, but of an unreasoning obedience to *ecclesiastical authority*. Wherever this authority is weakened, the door is left open for rationalism; and rationalism may abandon Trinitarianism and the forms of the Church altogether. I believe the High Churchman is right in prophesying that, if the views of these Broad Churchmen should generally prevail, the people would depart much further from the traditions and doctrines of the past than we can now foresee.

All these controversies and heresies, then, as a Unitarian sees them, are signs of a slow dissolving of the foundations of orthodoxy. The Calvinist feels his proof-texts sliding from under him. The liberal churchman, while his hold upon the great realities of Christian faith and life grows ever firmer and more enthusiastic, feels the standards of a traditional Church growing ever more vague and unreal.

All these movements point one way: toward a simplification of Christian doctrine and a change of emphasis in Christian teaching.

What, then, is the duty, in the present time of transition, of the Unitarian Church? These views of Scripture, of church authority, of church doctrine, which are now making their way among all the orthodox churches, are to us no novelties. As we read the controversies, our prevailing feeling is one of surprise that what has long been commonplace in our own thought should seem so revolutionary. It would be unnatural not to feel gratification at this wide-spread gain of liberal thought. And yet our deeper thought should not be one of complacency, but rather of serious responsibility. Our earlier work of negation and criticism is now being done by others on the largest scale. The creeds and confessions from which we long since departed are crumbling away under influences more powerful and destructive than any which are in our control. It is for us reverently to listen to the voice of the time which cries, as to that prophet in Patmos, "Behold, I make all things new!" Surrounded by dissolving opinions, it is not for us to cling with passionate feebleness to things outworn, but to devote our whole energy as a Church to all that is positive and constructive in religious thought, all that is deepening and helpful in the spiritual life.

If it be true that the whole Protestant world is moving toward something like Unitarianism, remember, friends, that it lies with us to show that such

a consummation is devoutly to be wished. It is for us to show that we have not lost our faith in God or our love of the Master; that all which is consoling and invigorating in Christianity is ours as richly as before.

We have not lost what is essential in Christianity. We have rejected Calvin, but not Jesus or Paul. We abide by the enlightened reason and conscience of this our own age, whenever it comes in irreconcilable conflict with the creeds of the past; for we believe that the knowledge of God must *change* as well as grow, with the unfolding human mind, and we would put away childish things. But we trust our hearts are still receptive of truly apostolic faith and charity. Our creed is brief and simple, as are the words of Christ; but we know that our beliefs concerning God and man are such as humble us in adoration before the mystery of the Divine, and quicken us with love and light and power, to strive for a diviner human life.

Although the controversies of which the air is now full concern matters which we have laid by long ago, yet this agitation cannot but be beneficial even to us who watch it from without, if thereby we are made to realize that our Unitarian faith is not only for our own peace, but imposes upon us a duty, a stewardship, of which we must finally render an account.

BENEDICTION.

GOD be with thee! Gently o'er thee
May His wings of mercy spread;
Be His way made plain before thee,
And His glory round thee shed!
Safely onward
May thy pilgrim feet be led!

God be with thee! With thy spirit
His abiding presence be,
Till thy heart that peace inherit
God alone can give to thee!
His indwelling
Help, and heal, and set thee free.



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